Commentary

Volume Fifty-Two, Number Two, August 1971

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STARS AND CELEBRITIES / Richard Schickel

"NEVER AGAIN!" / Milton Himmelfarb

BERKELEY: A TALE OF ONE CITY / Paul Seabury

READING ROBERT LOWELL / David Bromwich

THE REPUTATION OF ERIC ROHMER / William S. Pechter

A CERTAIN ANXIETY / Norman Podhoretz

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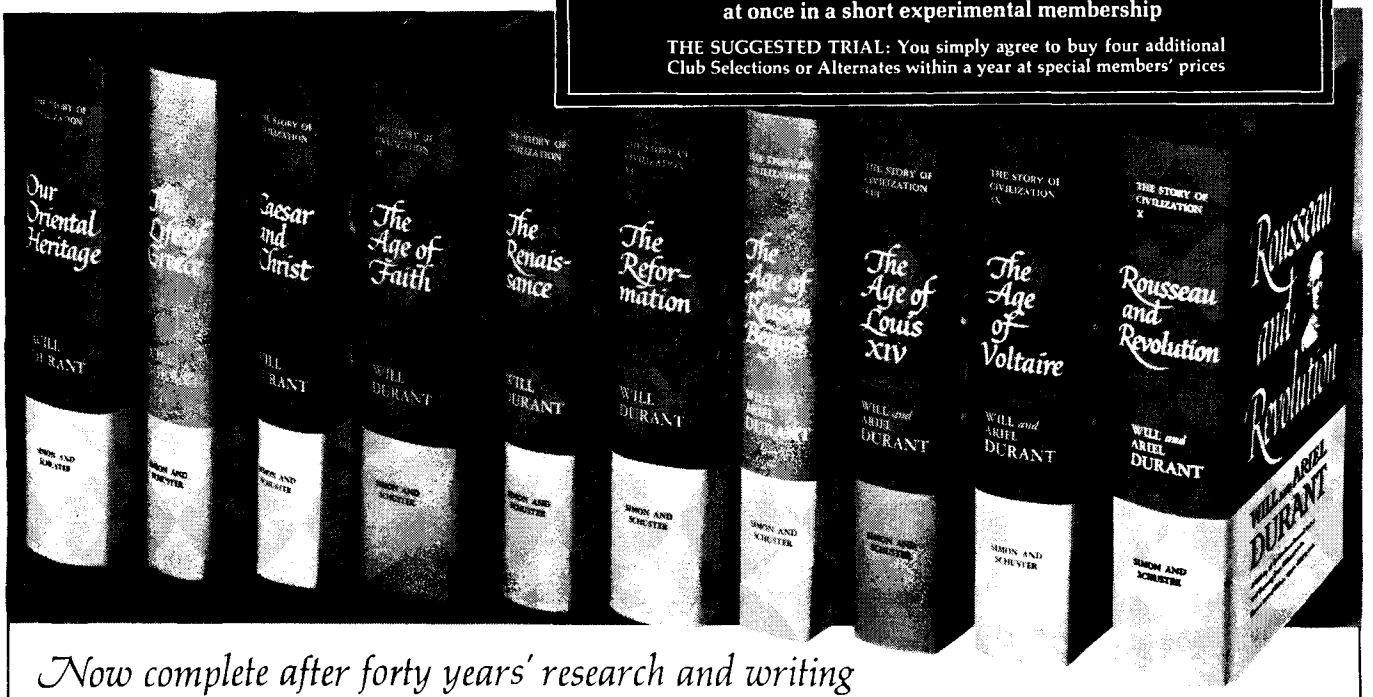

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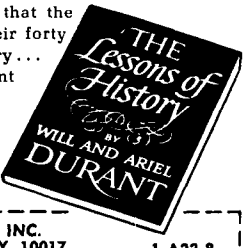

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A Certain Anxiety

Norman Podhoretz

In the last few years some of us—often to our own surprise and usually against our own will but at the ultimately irresistible command of instinct and judgment—have begun to feel a certain anxiety about the Jewish position in America. But is it indeed a sound instinct and a sober judgment which have coerced us into so sorry a state of discomfort and of unease? Are we, in short, right to worry, or are we wrong? Are we responding like healthy animals to danger, or are we being—as Jews are so often accused of being—paranoid, sniffing (in the words of an eminent social scientist who, I need hardly say, is Jewish himself) "an anti-Semite under every rock"? Instead of trying to answer that question in the abstract I want to approach it by looking briefly at the two traumatic events which actually led those of us who are now worried about the position of the Jews in America to feel the way we do.

The first of these events was, of course, the Six-Day War, not so much the war itself—which was a triumphal event and not a traumatic one—as the period leading up to the war and the period following its conclusion. Between the time the Egyptians closed the Straits of Tiran and the start of actual hostilities—two weeks I think it was—something happened to the Jews of America, and apparently also to the Jews of Eastern Europe, and even it seems to the Jews of Soviet Russia; something happened to Jews everywhere whose spiritual influence will never, I believe, be exhausted while those who were living then remain alive to remember. For the second time in this century, indeed for the second time in a quarter of a century, a major community of Jews was being threatened with annihilation, actual annihilation, while the world, as it seemed, stood complacently by. Certainly this posed no direct physical danger to the Jews of America. And yet the Jews of America felt as though it did and acted as though it did. Their response to the crisis was not the response of a man who is doing something in a philanthropic spirit for others; it was the response of a man who is doing something in a spirit of desperation for himself. It was as if the Jews of America had viscerally come to the conviction, severally each one and collectively all together, that they themselves could not long survive the destruction of Israel, that if Israel were destroyed and its Jewish inhabitants pushed, as the Arabs were so vociferously promising, into the sea, the Jews of America would be next, somehow and in some way the Jews of America would be next. For if there should be a second Holocaust, would it not prove that there was indeed a malevolent will at work on the face of the earth to wipe every Jew, wherever he might be, off the face of the earth, to make the entire world *Judenrein*? And if such a will existed, with Hitler as its servant in Europe, and with the Arabs and the Russians as its servants now in the Middle East, would it not find suitable and equally surprising servants to carry the work still further even in the old *goldene medineh* of the East European immigrants, even in the "golden land," even in America itself?

I do not suggest that every American Jew said such mystically outlandish things to himself in the period leading up to the Six-Day War. I do suggest, however, that in those two traumatic weeks most American Jews experienced a passion of solidarity with the Jews of Israel that was new and shocking

This is the text of an address originally delivered last spring at the Sixty-fifth Annual Meeting of the American Jewish Committee.

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and powerful, that went far deeper and much further than their commitment, such as it was, to Zionism or to Jewish survivalism in the sense of a belief in the special value and worth of Jewishness or of Judaism or of the Jewish group. The feeling was one of literal identification, a literal embodiment of the idea that *kol yisrael arevim zeh ba-zeh*, every Jew is a part of every other. Here, if we wish to use the language of mysticism, were words that were truly made flesh, and the American flesh into which they were transmuted experienced along with them—in many cases for the very first time—an ineradicable and inexpungible sense of Jewish vulnerability.

ONE might have expected that the spectacular triumph of Israeli arms in the war itself would lessen this new sense of Jewish vulnerability. It did not. What the victory did do for some of us, and perhaps for most American Jews, was to reinforce a thousandfold a new determination we had already tasted as a saving sweetener to the bitter sensations of isolation and vulnerability. It was a determination to resist any who would in any way and to any degree and for any reason whatsoever attempt to do us harm, any who would diminish us or destroy us, any who would challenge our right and our duty to look after ourselves and our families, any who would deny us the right to pursue our own interests or frustrate us in our duty to do so. We would from now on stand our ground, wherever that ground might be, and anyone who wished to harm us might succeed, but in succeeding would get no help from us, no help of any kind. I have argued elsewhere* that Hannah Arendt was wrong, heartlessly wrong, in claiming that many Jewish lives would have been saved if the Jews of Europe had resisted the Nazis more actively and more vigorously than they found themselves able to do. But there can be no question that the Nazis did seek, and did manage to get, a considerable measure of Jewish cooperation in carrying out the wholesale deportation and slaughter of the Jews. It would be a piece of blasphemous theodicy to see the Six-Day War as a redemption of the Holocaust; the Holocaust can have no redemption. But the Six-Day War can, I believe, be understood to have represented the recovery, after a long and uncertain convalescence, of the Jewish remnant from the grievous and so nearly fatal psychic and spiritual wounds it suffered at the hands of the Nazis. The Jews, who had so often and so recently chosen submission, now chose resistance. The Jews, who had so often violated the commandment to choose life, now obeyed that commandment and chose life. It was a thing to celebrate.

Jews celebrated it and will, I hope, go on celebrating it, forever and ever. But others, we soon found, did not celebrate it at all. The nations of the world, many of them, denounced it and reproved it; the churches of the world, most of them, lamented it with an unction whose oily odor lingers in the air and still has the power to sicken any healthy stomach; and the intellectuals of the world—to come to my own particular province, the piece of ground on which it has been given to me to make my own peculiarly Jewish stand—the intellectuals of the world were a story unto themselves. The tale is told of one very famous French intellectual who had signed a statement in the pre-war period urging that Israel be saved, and who then after the war angrily turned on the Jewish friend who had persuaded him to sign. "But you told me," he said, "that Israel would be beaten and the Jews massacred! You never told me they might win!" The anecdote is so good that it must be apocryphal. Jews, you see, are supposed to be beaten; they are not supposed to win. Jews are supposed to be massacred; they are not supposed to live, and if they do presume to live, they are certainly not supposed to presume to prevail.

And so a wave of what pleased to call itself "anti-Zionism" swept through the intellectual communities of the world, including the intellectual community of America, despite the fact—but of course in some sense also because of the fact—that so many members of that community in America are Jews. I would not for a moment wish to suggest that this wave of so-called anti-Zionist feeling, this outbreak of hostility to Israel, was motivated solely by the distaste of the intellectuals for the idea of the Jew as victor. There were other causes and other reasons. The hostility to Israel was part of a larger hostility among intellectuals to America, to middle-class values, to industrialism, to technology, and even to democracy—though the hatred of democracy was rarely expressed with the same candor as the allied detestations of America, of middle-class values, of industrialism, and of technology. Nor do I wish for a moment to suggest that all intellectuals everywhere shared in these related enmities. Many who were Jewish had, often to their own amazement, experienced the same sense of identification with Jewish destiny that had overtaken most other Jews in the period leading up to the Six-Day War, and these intellectuals could not be won over to any sentiments of hostility toward Israel no matter how seductively packaged or hypocritically framed in friendly or sympathetic terms. All over the world, too, intellectuals of the social-democratic persuasion, like Günter Grass in Germany or Michael Harrington here, remained friendly to Israel. But in other intellectual circles, especially those within the ambiance of what is loosely called the New Left, "anti-Zionism" was the order of the day.

Now it is perfectly true that anti-Zionism is not necessarily anti-Semitism. But it is also true, I fear, that the distinction between the two is often invisible to the naked Jewish eye, and that anti-Zionism has served to legitimate the open expression of a good deal of anti-Semitism which might otherwise have remained subject to the taboo against anti-Semitism that prevailed in American public life from the time of Hitler until, roughly, the Six-Day War. And it is more than anything else the breaking of that taboo, the taboo against the open expression of hostility to Jews, which has caused some of us to feel a certain anxiety about the Jewish position in America. It is so long since overt hostility to Jews has been regarded as a permissible attitude in America that we simply

*"Hannah Arendt on Eichmann," COMMENTARY, September 1963.

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cannot say what consequences, if any, might follow from the weakening of this inhibition. No one can say for certain, for example, what harm may follow to Jews as a result of the grumbling in the American literary world over the prominence of Jews in the national culture—a grumbling which has grown louder and louder, more and more brazen, less and less ashamed of itself in the last three or four years, and which so ominously resembles the bitter complaint against Jewish cultural "dominance" in Berlin and Vienna in the 1920's. Perhaps no harm will come of this in America, perhaps much. I do not know, nor does any social scientist, nor does any pollster. But I worry and I do not think my worry is paranoid.

BUT of course it was not only in connection with Israel and not only among intellectuals and literary people that the taboo against the open expression of anti-Semitism was broken in America in the declining years of the 60's. It was also broken in connection with the black revolution and among those forces, both black and white, who have seen the best hope for blacks in the militant separatism which used to go by the name of Black Power and which mainly manifests itself today at the extreme edges of the movement for community control. And this brings me to the second of the two traumatic events which have led those of us who are worried about the Jewish position in America to feel the way we do—the New York teachers' strike of 1968.

This strike was a long and complicated affair, and I do not propose to go into it here in detail. There are, however, two points that have to be made about it in the context of this discussion: first, that it brought black anti-Semitism into widespread public view; and second, that it exposed in certain elements of what blacks themselves like to call the white power structure an apparent readiness to purchase civil peace in the United States—I do not say social justice—at the direct expense of the Jews.

As to black anti-Semitism, there is this to be said: it is anti-Semitism. Surveys have been made which purport to show that there is less anti-Semitism among blacks than exists among whites, or at any rate that there is no more. This may very well be true, I think it probably is true, but it does not mean that the anti-Semitism which does exist among blacks is anything other than anti-Semitism, or that it is any the less odious, or any the less a potential threat to Jews than the anti-Semitism which exists among whites. Those who tolerate black anti-Semitism are tolerating anti-Semitism. Those who apologize for black anti-Semitism are apologizing for anti-Semitism. Those who explain black anti-Semitism with reference to the behavior of Jews—who attribute it to Jewish merchants or Jewish landlords or Jewish teachers or Jewish school principals—are simply practicing the age-old technique of blaming the victim of bigotry for bringing bigotry down upon his head; and this is in itself an anti-Semitic tradition. Yet the anti-Semitism which surfaced among blacks during the New York teachers' strike was in fact more often tolerated, was more often explained, was more often "understood," and was more often blamed on the Jews themselves than it was ever forthrightly and straightforwardly condemned. And this too caused some of us to worry. Were we being paranoid?

And some of us began to worry even more as we inquired into the causes of the teachers' strike and as we looked more deeply into the role played in the entire dispute by the Mayor of New York and by the Ford Foundation. In the support given by the Mayor's office and by the Ford Foundation to the forces struggling against the union and on behalf of community control, we began to wonder whether we might not be witnessing the formation of a new alliance between the patriciate and the underclass against the liberal center. George Orwell, whose name was so much on all our minds in the darkest days of the 60's, had once said that the greatest danger to liberal democracy would come from "An army of unemployed led by millionaires preaching the Sermon on the Mount." How had he, we wryly asked ourselves, foreseen so much? Now if such an alliance between the patriciate and the underclass was really in formation, it posed a very great threat indeed to the security of Jews, for its immediate objective would obviously be—and in fact already was—the destruction of just those social mechanisms and processes under whose aegis the Jews had been able to escape the grosser discriminations which had been directed against them in an earlier day—specifically the merit system in civil-service employment and in university admissions. The merit system had neither been invented by Jews, nor had it come into being for the sake of Jews. Yet Jews had prospered under an arrangement which, at least in principle, treated all persons on the basis of their merits as individuals regardless of "race, color, creed, or place of national origin," in the familiar phrase that has now acquired so quaintly archaic a ring. Daniel P. Moynihan had warned years earlier that if the merit system were to be replaced by a system of proportional representation according to race or ethnic origin, the Jews, constituting a mere 3 per cent of the population, would be driven out. Yet such a replacement was precisely what one heard—and what one still hears—being advocated on every side and in circles which regarded themselves then, and continue to regard themselves now, as impeccably liberal in outlook. To put the matter brutally, but with no touch whatever of distortion or exaggeration, in the name of justice to blacks, discriminatory measures were to be instituted once more against the Jews. With all due reluctance, of course. With a heavy heart, of course. But never mind: the Jews would be all right. The Jews were always all right. The Jews could always be trusted to make their way.

Were those of us who worried about the growing influence of *this* line of thought paranoid to worry? I cannot believe that we were, and I cannot believe that any rational person could disinterestedly believe that we were.

BUT granted that those of us who have been worried about the hostility to Israel among the intellectuals, feeling with our new sense of literal implication in the destiny of Israel and our concomitant sense of Jewish vulnerability, that

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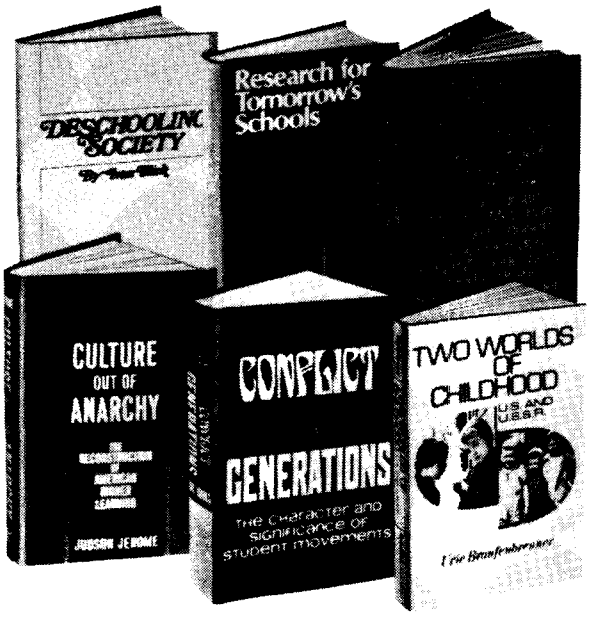

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we ourselves are somehow implicated, *arevim*, in that hostility to Israel as participating victims; granted that those of us who have been worried about the weakening of the taboo against the open expression of anti-Semitism both among literary people and among blacks; granted that those of us who have been worried about the readiness in so many quarters, many of them powerful and friendly once to Jews, to accept the reinstitution of discriminatory measures against the Jews as necessary to the establishment of social justice in America; granted that those of us who have been worried about all this have been worried about something real, something which to be sure mainly exists in the realm of ideas and attitudes and has hardly yet begun to make itself felt in the realm of practice and policy. . . . Granted, then, that we are not paranoid. Are we perhaps something worse?

For we have also been accused of worse. The great revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg once wrote to a fellow Jew as follows: "Why do you come with your special Jewish sorrows? I feel just as sorry for the wretched Indian victims in Putamayo, the Negroes in Africa. . . . The 'lofty silence of the eternal' in which so many cries have echoed away unheard resounds so strongly within me that I cannot find a special corner in my heart for the ghetto. I feel at home in the entire world wherever there are clouds and birds and human tears." That was 1917. Lately, in 1971, some of us have been chided in amazingly similar terms. We have been chided not only by radicals of the New Left persuasion and by revolutionaries who, like Rosa Luxemburg before them, are frank to disavow any special concern for their fellow Jews, but also by people who presume to speak in the name of Judaism and of the Jewish people: Rabbis and Preachers and Teachers in Israel. For expressing our anxieties about the Jewish position in America, we have been accused by such people of a selfish and mean-spirited parochialism. For coming to them with our "special Jewish sorrows" we have been accused of urging Jews to withdraw into some ethnocentric enclave where, presumably, no "clouds and birds and human tears" are to be found. We have been insultingly treated to Theology-1 lectures on the virtues of universalism, lectures drawn from a debased and discredited tradition of 19th-century Jewish thought. We have been instructed by some that Judaism commands the Jews to campaign against Richard Nixon, and by others that Judaism commands the Jews to send CARE packages to Eldridge Cleaver in Algiers —the *shofet* Eldridge Cleaver, as he is ludicrously called in a prime document of this school of thought.

Is there any truth in these accusations of parochialism and withdrawal? There is none. Our concern for "special Jewish sorrows," far from leading us into an advocacy of Jewish withdrawal, has been one of the dynamically impelling forces behind the newly aggressive affirmation we have been making of the values of the liberal democratic order, and the newly militant defense of that order which we have mounted against the ideas of those, especially on the radical Left, who have devoted their energies either ignorantly or innocently or in full nihilistic awareness to damaging or destroying the liberal democratic order in America.

For in thinking about the Jewish position in America and in trying to understand why it is that this position is threatened, and by whom it is threatened, we have come to the conclusion that it is threatened most directly by the same forces which have mounted so abandoned an assault on the values and institutions of the liberal democratic order in recent years: the forces, that is, of the radical Left.

Now once upon a time the worst enemies of the Jews were to be found on the ideological Right, and the time may very well come when this will be true again. But it is simply not true today. The main source of anti-Semitic propaganda in the world today is not a fascist country like Nazi Germany but a socialist one, so-called: the Soviet Union. In the Middle East the most intransigent enemies of Israel are not Arab conservatives like King Hussein but Arabs of the revolutionary Left, and the more ardently revolutionary they are, the more violent is their hatred of Israel and the more determined they are to destroy both the State and its Jewish population. In Europe, it is the radical Left and not the Right which chants such slogans as this lovely bit from the SDS in Germany:

> *Macht den Nahen Osten rot,*
> *Schlagt die Zionisten tot.*
> (Make the Middle East red,
> Beat the Zionists to death.)

And in America—in America we find publications of the ideological Right like *Alternative* warning against and deploring the growth of anti-Semitism, while publications of the Left like the *Village Voice* blithely go on expressing or apologizing for anti-Semitic sentiments and ideas.

Thus whatever the case may have been yesterday, and whatever the case may be tomorrow, the case today is that the most active enemies of the Jews are located not in the precincts of the ideological Right but in the ideological precincts of the radical Left. This does not mean that the Jews of America ought to join the ideological Right, not that there is any danger that a people so overwhelmingly liberal in its political views will ever really move to the Right. It does mean, however, that Jews should recognize the ideology of the radical Left for what it is: an enemy of liberal values and a threat to the Jewish position.

Those of us who have been fighting the ideas of the radical Left have been fighting them precisely in the name of liberal values, not in the name of Judaism. In carrying on this fight, we do not flatter ourselves that we are also carrying out the commandments of the Torah. It is shallow and vulgar, if not blasphemously presumptuous, to think that Judaism gives its blessings or its warrant to a particular political position, unless of course that position be theocratic monarchism. But in fighting the ideological opposition to liberal values on the radical Left, we do know ourselves to be fighting the fight for Jewish security in America as well. It is, we think, a fight worth fighting and we mean to go on fighting it, for as long as may be necessary, and no matter how roundly we are abused as reactionary, or paranoid, or parochial. ■

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Jewish Calendar
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September
20 Monday First Day Rosh Hashanah
21 Tuesday Second Day Rosh Hashanah
22 Wednesday Fast of Gedaliah
29 Wednesday Yom Kippur

Almond

October
4 Monday First Day Sukkot
5 Tuesday Second Day Sukkot
10 Sunday Hoshana Rabbah
11 Monday Shemini Atzeret
12 Tuesday Simhat Torah
19 Tuesday New Moon Heshvan. 1st day
20 Wednesday New Moon Heshvan. 2nd day

Pomegranate

November
18 Thursday New Moon Kislev. 1st day
19 Friday New Moon Kislev. 2nd day

Olive

December
13 Monday First Day Hanukkah
18 Saturday New Moon Tevet. 1st day
19 Sunday New Moon Tevet. 2nd day
28 Tuesday Fast of Tevet

Fig

1972
January
17 Monday New Moon Shevat
31 Monday New Year for Trees

Citron

February
15 Tuesday New Moon Adar. 1st day
16 Wednesday New Moon Adar. 2nd day
28 Monday Fast of Esther
29 Tuesday Purim

Date Palm

March
1 Wednesday Shushan Purim
16 Thursday New Moon Nisan
30 Thursday First Day Passover
31 Friday Second Day Passover

Orange

April
5 Wednesday Seventh Day Passover
6 Thursday Eighth Day Passover
14 Friday New Moon Iyar. 1st day
15 Saturday New Moon Iyar. 2nd day
19 Wednesday Israel Independence Day

Carob

May
2 Tuesday Lag Ba Omer
13 Sunday New Moon Sivan
19 Friday First Day Shavuot
20 Saturday Second Day Shavuot

Myrtle

June
12 Monday New Moon Tammuz. 1st day
13 Tuesday New Moon Tammuz. 2nd day
29 Thursday Fast of Tammuz

Adam's Apple (Forbidden Fruit)

July
12 Wednesday New Moon Av
20 Thursday Fast of Av

Bay

August
10 Thursday New Moon Elul. 1st day
11 Friday New Moon Elul. 2nd day

Hazel

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Letters from Readers

Public & Private Morality

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

One reason thinkers hesitate to admit publicly to their changes of mind is that they know their opponents will take unfair advantage. Edmund Stillman's egregious assault on the person and work of Hans Morgenthau is a case in point ["Telling 'Truth' to Power," April].

To publish one's essays and occasional pieces written over a decade as tumultuous as the 1960's is an act of courage. Mr. Stillman displays an unseemly delight in holding up to ridicule what he claims to be Professor Morgenthau's predictive errors of the early 60's. Does Mr. Stillman really believe that Professor Morgenthau is unaware of the changes in his own thinking? It would seem strange indeed if the horror of the U.S. war in Indochina had *not* made a major impact on a man's thought about American power in the world. Perhaps Mr. Stillman is the exception of undeviating consistency.

The author's personal animosity toward Professor Morgenthau (he is "shrill," indulges in "affectations of high seriousness," is "ill-tempered," a "congenital nay-sayer," "self-important," "pretentious," guilty of "self adulation," etc.) may be rooted in experiences not revealed in this article and about which we can form no judgment, but personal animus is a poor substitute for coming to terms with Professor Morgenthau's arguments, a task which Mr. Stillman steadfastly avoids.

Most inaccurate and cruel is the charge that Professor Morgenthau has all along been "running with the pack." (It is not clear how one can be "eccentric" and a "congenital nay-sayer" and still be guilty of pandering to the demands of the intellectual and political marketplace.) In truth, Hans Morgenthau was speaking and writing against our Indochina venture long before such views were popular or even respectable. In 1965 he joined us in Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam and his identification with what was then viewed as a marginal and suspect peace movement exacted a high price in his standing both with official Washington and with academia.

Privately and publicly Hans Morgenthau has given moving expression to the anguish with which he has had to rethink the role of morality in international relations and in domestic politics. If Mr. Stillman did not detect that anguish in Professor Morgenthau's book, perhaps the fault lies not entirely with Professor Morgenthau. Mr. Stillman's resentment suggests almost a sense of betrayal in the face of Hans Morgenthau's stubborn insistence upon continuing to change. For our part, we will continue to argue with Professor Morgenthau, confident that his thought will enrich us in the future as it has in the past.

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL
Jewish Theological Seminary
New York City

RICHARD J. NEUHAUS
Church of St. John the Evangelist
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edmund Stillman in accusing Hans Morgenthau of "rancor" and "ungenerous contempt for intellectual difference" must have wondered, at least momentarily, whether those phrases did not fit his attack. If he wants to show that Morgenthau is not infallible, nobody (including Morgenthau) will argue. If he wants to challenge Morgenthau's judgments, many of us will gain from a valid debate. But neither of these aims can account for the shrill attack on Morgenthau's character.

Surely Morgenthau ranks among the three or four most influential academic critics of the wisdom and ethics of the American misadventure in Vietnam. Famous though he is for his "realism," he has eloquently called on his adopted country to be true to the high moral qualities that its leaders have often voiced. We might expect a judicious critic to show some appreciation for these services to the body politic.

One detail, in particular, is especially unfair. By writing that *Truth and Power* is a selection of "presumably the best" essays of a decade, then adding that "much that is embarrassing has been left out," Mr. Stillman gives the impression that Morgenthau has hidden the judgments that he would like to forget. But *Truth and Power* includes all the major essays of the period *except*—as Morgen-

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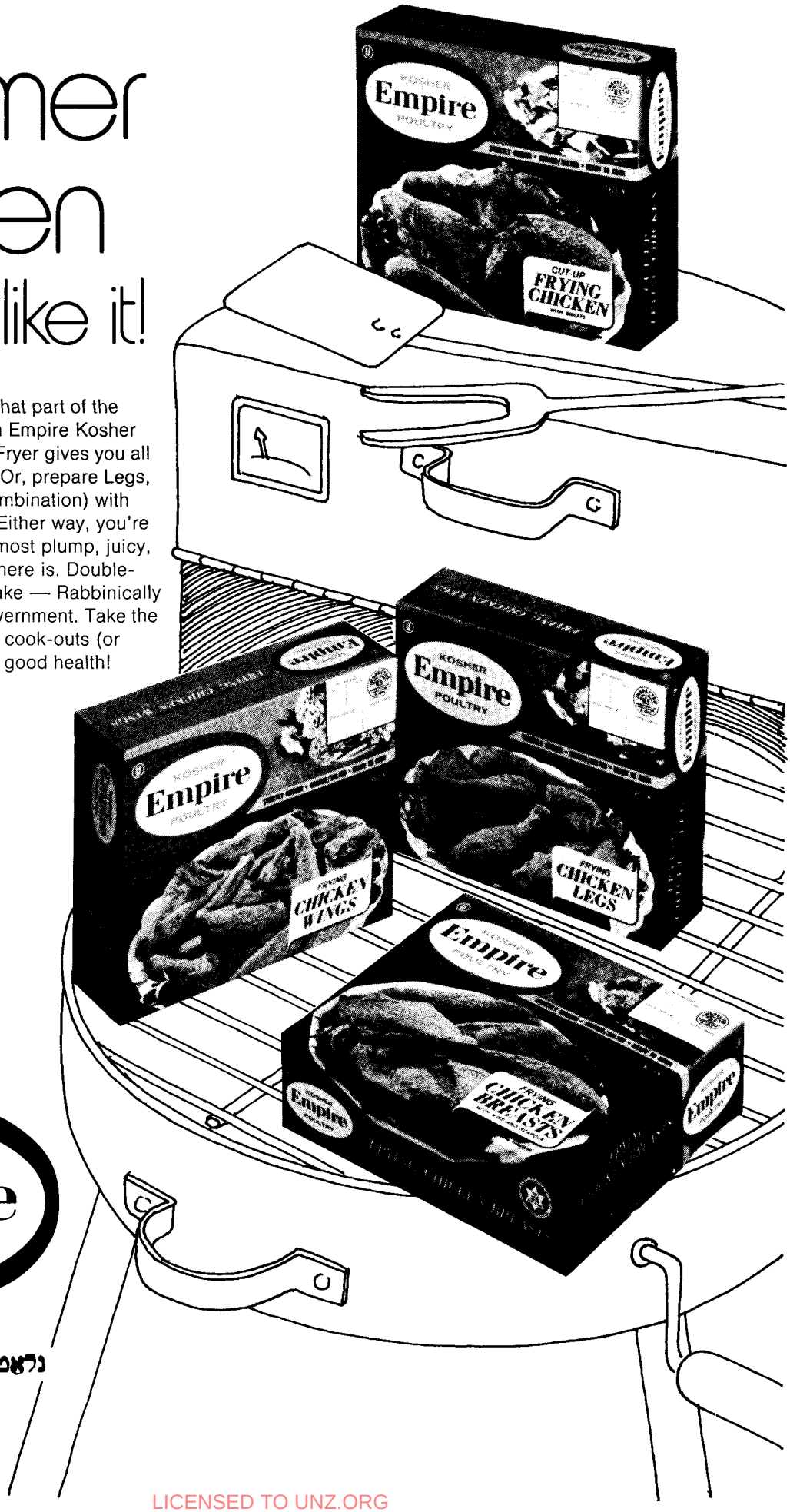

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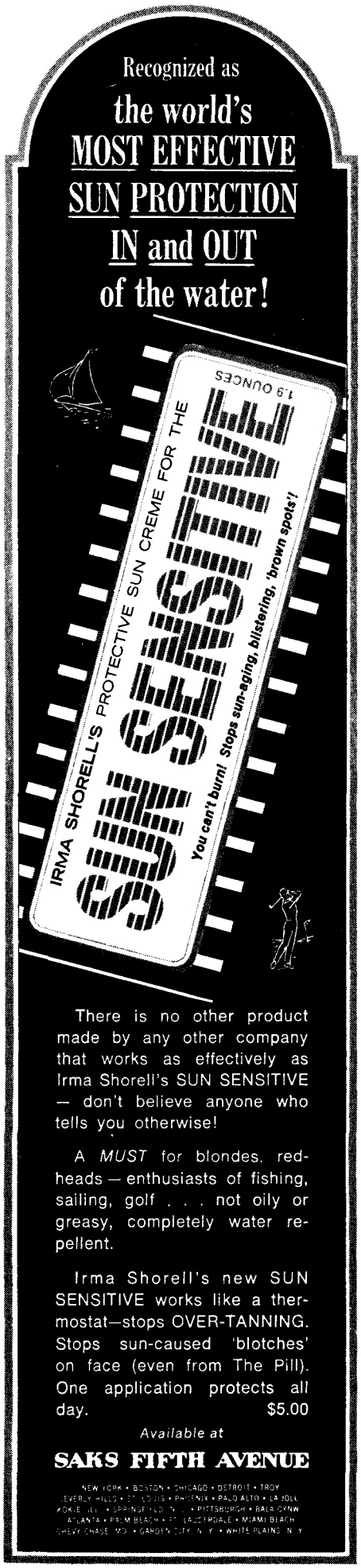
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thau clearly states on page *ix*—those already published in *Vietnam and the United States*, which included the specific essay that Stillman ridicules Morgenthau for omitting. Far from suppressing judgments he has changed, Morgenthau has spread out the record so that any reader can appraise it.

To students interested in the ethics of American foreign policy I have frequently recommended two books: *Power and Impotence* by Edmund Stillman and William Pfaff and *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* by Hans Morgenthau. Both books share many qualities of moral sensitivity, much needed in these desperate days. Hence it is especially disappointing to see the co-author of one engage in an intemperate attack on the author of the other.

ROGER L. SHINN
Union Theological Seminary
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As the editor of Hans Morgenthau's *Truth and Power: Essays of a Decade, 1960-70,* I am admittedly biased, so I won't attempt to answer Edmund Stillman's curiously biased evaluation of a book I found to be penetrating, wise, and moving. But Mr. Stillman's subtle attack on Professor Morgenthau's intellectual integrity cannot go unchallenged. ("One certainly cannot judge Professor Morgenthau's record as a prophet on the basis of this book alone," writes Stillman. "Much that is embarrassing has been left out.") In preparing this manuscript, I read through most of Morgenthau's published articles of the period and then he and I made the final selections. The question of "faulty prophecy" was never raised by either of us as a criterion. We were concerned with eliminating repetition and developing a cohesive book that reflected the range of significant issues of the decade and was pertinent today. The Vietnam article referred to by Mr. Stillman was not included simply because it had already been reprinted in another Morgenthau collection; perhaps Stillman neglected to read the Preface, where this information appeared: "I have, as far as possible, tried to eliminate duplication and have in a few instances combined articles dealing with the same subject matter. Early articles on Vietnam, starting with 'Vietnam—Another Korea?' in May 1962, and ending with 'Vietnam: Shadow and Substance of Power' in September 1965, were separately published in *Vietnam and the United States* and have not been reprinted here."

ARNOLD DOLIN
Praeger Publishers
New York City

EDMUND STILLMAN writes:

To read these letters one would think that my article on Hans Morgenthau's *Truth and Power* was nothing but a series of gratuitous personal attacks, unrelated to the gravest issues of public policy and morality, and that my charges against him were not buttressed by extensive quotations from his essays of the past decade. The reverse is true. I do not know Professor Morgenthau. (We met briefly on a television program at the time of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia; but that is all.) It is the correspondents who make a personal defense, on the grounds, it would seem, that Professor Morgenthau is in private life a humane man and one who has confessed the agony of changing his mind. They do not confront the actual charges raised: Did Professor Morgenthau, or did he not, counsel us to assassinate Diem in 1963? Did he, or did he not, counsel a forward policy against Castro and the Soviets in the Caribbean in 1962? Did he, or did he not, mock U Thant for suggesting a decade after Stalin's death that the Soviets had abandoned their hopes of communization of the world through force? Did he, or did he not, dismiss Senator Fulbright's call for a rethinking of U.S. foreign policy with the warning that the so-called new "peacefulness" of the Soviet Union really stemmed from "our unwillingness to face up to Soviet challenges [which] made a direct military confrontation unnecessary"?

And having given such advice all along—advice either consonant with official U.S. foreign policy, or even more bellicose—does he, or does he not, now counsel us at home to take the revolutionary road? Professor Morgenthau is asking for violence in a land already distracted and beset by violence.

These are the issues. They are not conjured away by the suggestion that I have committed an act of *lèse majesté* in calling the record into question. Nor do I seek to apply to Professor Morgenthau a standard I would not wish applied to myself. It is not enough to claim

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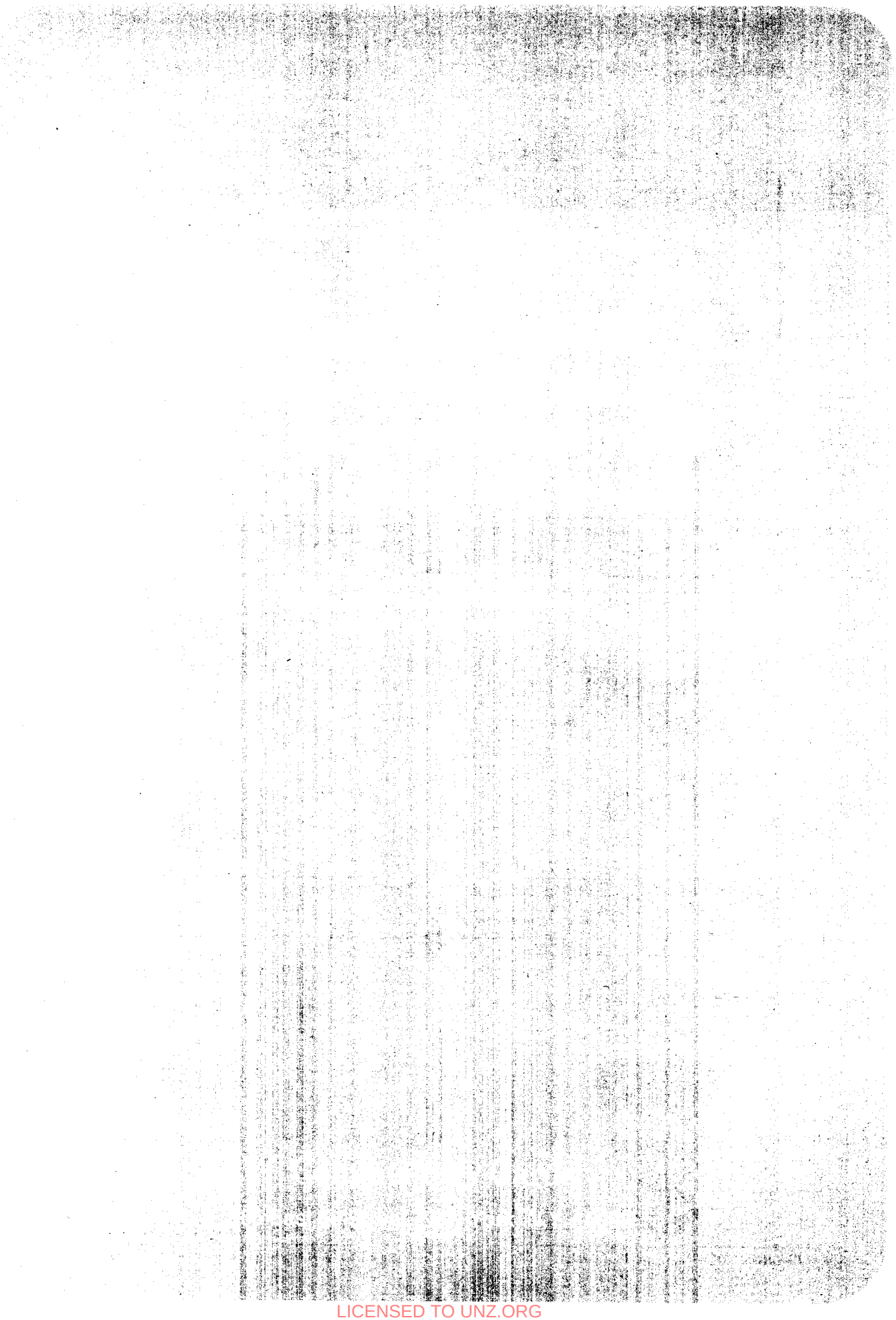

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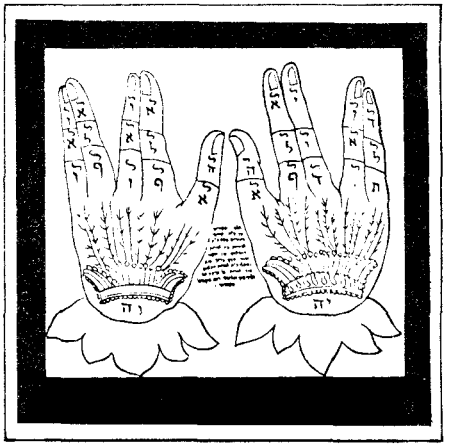

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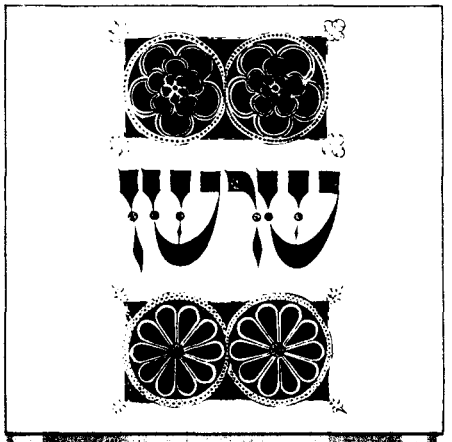

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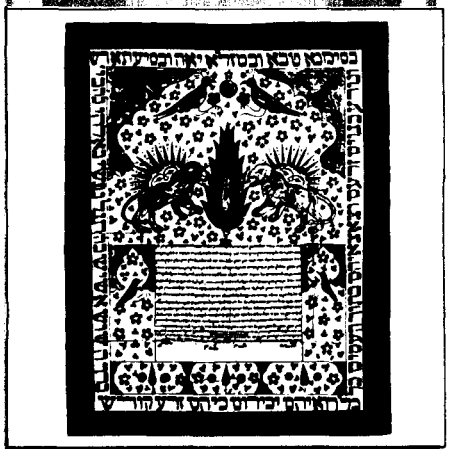

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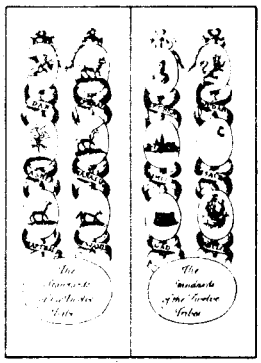

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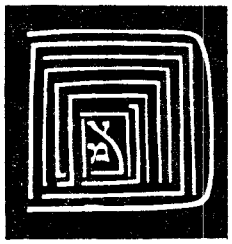

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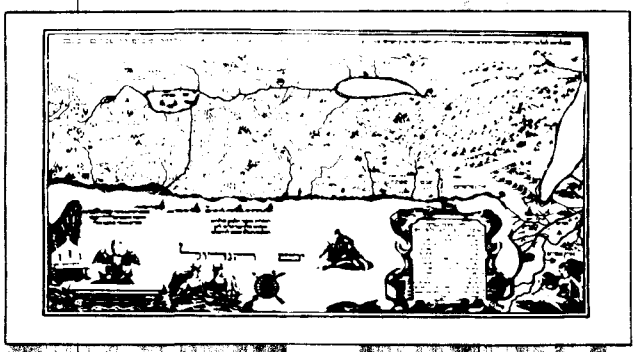

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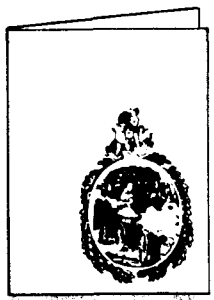

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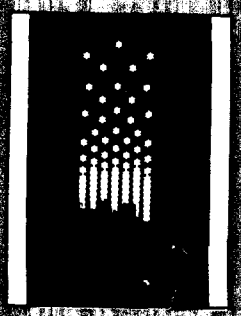

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intellectual courage by making public display of changing one's mind. Anyone who writes books and articles on policy issues must reckon with the possibility that his advice will have influence. The public has every right, though it is exercised too seldom, to ask how good in the past that advice has been. In Professor Morgenthau's case that advice differed only in nuance at best, and at worst in greater bellicosity, from official policy.

But there is finally the issue of morality. Professor Morgenthau's moral failure seems to stem from a failure to visualize the concrete consequences of *words*. It is so tempting, when one is a good talker, to run on and on into abstraction. But to talk grandly of the "Western tradition of political philosophy [which] justifies revolution against a tyrannical government, and even tyrannicide" comes down in the end to a sick and frightened old man, Diem, alone in a little room with his assassins. To tell us that the present problems of America cannot be solved rationally within the present political structure, to suggest revolution, is to come in the end to gutters of blood.

How easy for all of us if the present dilemmas of America had all been made by the easily identified "bad" people—the military-industrial complex and the CIA and the FBI and the money men and the hard-hats and Mayor Daley. I am afraid your correspondents, and all of us, will have to look deeper than that.

The Uses of Statistics

To the Editor of Commentary:

Whatever other faults Ramsey Clark's *Crime in America* may have, misrepresentation of statistics is not one of them, despite James Q. Wilson's remarks in his review [Books in Review, March]. When Clark claims that the statistic "one person in 400 is the victim of a crime of violence in a given year" implies that the average individual's chance of being a victim is once in 400 years, he is substantially correct. If the probabilities remain the same, this average person can expect to be a victim only once in 400 years, though the attack could come at any time during this period.

Mr. Wilson then goes on to commit a very common blunder in his own calculation of probabilities, though in this instance the numerical difference is not great. If the average person has a one-in-200 chance of being a victim of a violent crime each year, then over a seventy-year period his chance of being a victim is one minus the quantity 199/200 raised to the seventieth power, or about 0.296, *not* seventy times 1/200 or 0.350 as Mr. Wilson claims. For a black female, the lifetime chances are slightly lower than one in two, not better than one in two. But all these calculations depend on the probability of attack remaining the same from year to year, which itself is an unlikely event.

Edward J. Seligman
Broad Brook, Connecticut

James Q. Wilson writes:

I am happy to defer to Mr. Seligman's grasp of probability theory but not to his reading of the implications of Ramsey Clark's statistic. As Mr. Seligman notes, my crude estimate of the lifetime probability of victimization (.350) is not very different from his exact one (.296). But both figures, I persist, are *very* different from the soothing suggestion by Mr. Clark that the average person has only a one-in-400 chance of victimization. Without further explanation, which Mr. Clark does not provide, that statistic will be read by the average person as meaning that the odds are 399-to-one against his victimization. He will conclude that public concern over events so "rare" is simply misplaced. I have spoken to many people who have read the figure in precisely this way, just as I have spoken to persons who have read Mr. Hoover's "crime clock" to mean that on every street corner there lurks a mugger. I am sure Mr. Seligman would join me in asking that both sides shun the use of "clever" statistics.

Christianity and Anti-Semitism

To the Editor of Commentary:

We must be grateful to A. Roy Eckardt . . . for pointing out in his review [Books in Review, March] some of the severe flaws in Friedrich Heer's recent book, *God's First Love*. In my opinion, Heer the scholar is highly inventive, the thinker muddled, the writer careless. He is so much in the grip of emotions that he rarely sees the use to which his historical combinations can be put. . . .

Take, for instance, this passage quoted by Mr. Eckardt: "Christendom today stands close to the abyss of self-destruction through nuclear weapons. This suicide follows in historical terms logically from the practice, stretching over fifteen hundred years, of killing the blood relations of the Jew Jesus, the son of the Jewess Miriam, Mary. It is being prepared at deeply concealed levels of the subconscious. This subconscious is aware that Christendom has failed in its attempts to liquidate the Jews and to conquer the world."

Heer's interpretation reminds me of Humpty-Dumpty's boast: "I can explain all the poems that ever were invented—and a good many that haven't been invented just yet." Where is Heer's Christendom located? Are the United States, Great Britain, and France, as atomic powers, its representatives? Are China and Russia part of it? Again, were Chairman Mao to unleash a nuclear war, would he be acting under the compulsion of a death-wish because Christendom did not succeed in liquidating the Jews?

What disturbs me about the paragraph quoted above—one of a number of similar ramblings—is not so much Heer's watery logic, which flows downstream and upstream, nor his foolish self-assurance in reading the subconscious of others, but his childish incredulity in the face of dynamite. He does not believe that it is dangerous, hence he will not cease playing with it.

Wrapped up in fantasies that make him link events entirely unrelated to one another, Heer does not foresee the possibility of someone giving his already twisted analysis a new, anti-Semitic twist. A physics professor of my youth, not very bright but a stalwart nationalist, may be a case in point. The name Einstein gave him "the creeps." At the thought that matter may be "frozen" energy, his own heart froze. That our means of measuring time and space are relative, he was ready to admit only when under the influence of too much beer. In his "lucid" moments, however, he was convinced that the "Theory of Special Relativity" was subversive, part of a "Bolshevik plot." His only evidence—he needed no other—was the fact that Einstein was a Jew.

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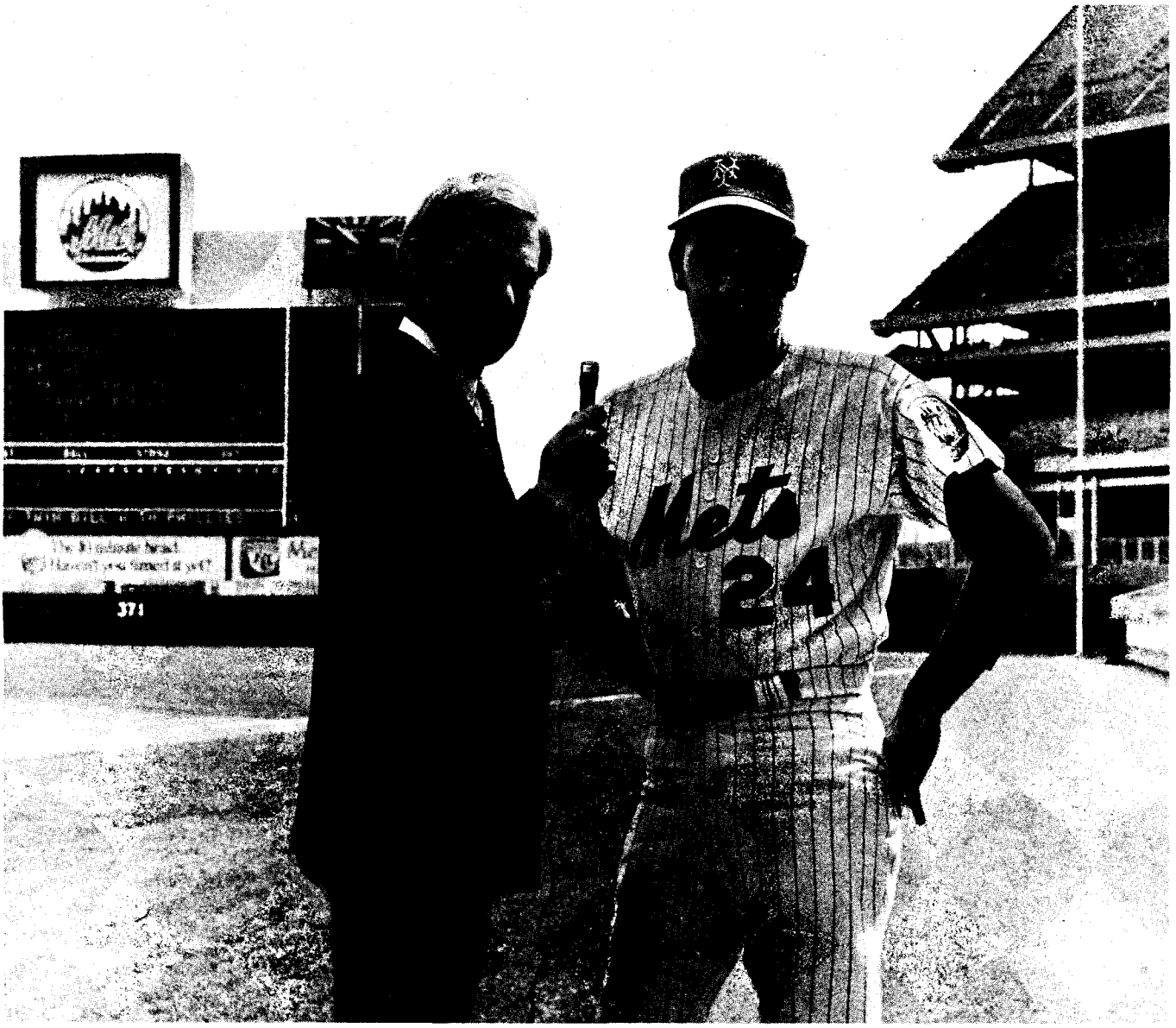

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It is my nightmare that a man of like prejudice will be tempted by Heer's somersault to try a leap of his own. The man I see in my dreams says to Heer: "How can you say that the nuclear threat is nothing but a Christian death-wish? Is it not rather the sign of Jewish revenge? Were not Jews decisively involved in the building of the atomic bomb? Were not some of the scientific pathfinders like Lise Meitner, Max Born, James Franck, Jews? Was not the man who convinced President Roosevelt of the need for manufacture of the dreadful weapon, a Jew by the name of Alexander Sachs? Were not quite a few members of the Manhattan Project and the Atomic Energy Commission, like Robert Oppenheimer, John von Neumann, Leo Szilard, Edward Teller, and others, Jews?" The material is all here. . . .

Convinced though I am of Heer's compassion with, and righteous anger at, the agonies of the Jewish people, his other passion—that for finding hidden motives and tying together unconnected issues or events—makes his thought process and psychology come close to those of the anti-Semite. Moreover, the murder of the Jews has become such an obsession with him that he gives the State of Israel, that triumph over Hitler's "Final Solution," but little attention. As far as I can see, there is in this book of over five-hundred pages only one positive affirmation of the State of Israel. . . .

Heer's book is full of non sequiturs and half-truths, overstatements and omissions. But none of these trouble me as much as the unredeemed character of his book. It is meant to be a Catholic's answer to Auschwitz, indeed to all the anguish of the Jews. In my opinion, it is a poor one. An entirely different answer has been given by a Jew, one who did not learn of the horrors from reports but experienced them in his own flesh and soul. The book is small in size but rich in meaning. I wish that everyone, reader of Heer or not, would let *Phoenix over the Galilee* by Yehiel De Nur (who writes under the pseudonym Katzetnik 135633) cleanse his heart. Heer's account is verbose, evil is never allowed to speak to the reader without the author interposing himself. De Nur's book is a masterpiece of word painting. The reader meets evil face to face; still, he is not crushed. Heer's book begets despair. De Nur's leads to hope and rebirth.

(Msgr.) John M. Oesterreicher
Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies
Seton Hall University
South Orange, New Jersey

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . A. Roy Eckardt's review of *God's First Love: Christians and Jews over Two Thousand Years* by Frederich Heer falls so far below the standards which Commentary has generally maintained that I wonder if the editors gave the review, and its significance, the careful attention it deserved.

It is shocking that the magazine became a vehicle for such thoughts as these: historic Christianity teaches that "To *be* a Jew is to deserve to die. It is an ineluctable truth that historic Christian thought has preponderantly agreed that the devil and the Jew are one . . . [that] the Jew was no longer a human being. Adolf Hitler could quite correctly see himself as simply carrying out what the Church has for centuries preached and practiced against the Jews."

Mr. Eckardt also treats readers to the thought that Hitler's helpers and sympathizers were found especially in the churches, and that anti-Semitism is due to a primordial conspiracy of Christendom with demonic powers. Finally, he argues that Christendom turns to self-destruction as it has failed to liquidate all the Jews.

This is such fearful rubbish that I am genuinely sorry that it appeared in the pages of Commentary.

This seems to be a time when writers ventilate their frustration on any handy institution, without regard to fact. The quotations above, only a sampling, blindly attribute the vices of a morbid few to whole communities. Surely, in personal pique, men have called, and do call, one another "devils." A handful may even mean it. But to attribute this to "historic Christianity" is just preposterous. Where in the mainstream of Christian literature can you find the argument that Jews were not human beings and ought to be killed? A George-Lincoln-Rockwell type writing in the 9th century was no more representative of God-fearing Christianity then than he was in the 1960's. A community with criminals in its midst is not a criminal community.

It is time that our "historians" reexamined the inventive history that places Nazism and Catholicism on the same side of the street. The briefest look at the facts will remind them of the hostility and incompatibility of the two. Catholic leaders clearly saw the pagan assumptions of the Nazis and, long after political opposition had been crushed, continued their social and cultural resistance to the Nazis; Pope Pius IX in 1937 wrote an encyclical clearly condemning Nazi theory and practice; Catholic youth groups refused to affiliate with the Nazis and were dissolved by them; Dachau and other prison camps held thousands of priests who died with the others. An author may dislike Catholicism but he ought not to dislike history.

The fact that Dr. Heer, the author of the book under review, allegedly encouraged these thoughts is no excuse for giving them currency. . . .

(Rev. Msgr.) Eugene V. Clark
Director of Communications
Archdiocese of New York
New York City

A. Roy Eckardt writes:

Where Monsignor Oesterreicher's commentary is not redundant, it is irrelevant, and through its irrelevance it compounds Christian perversity. Part of his letter simply parallels my critique of Dr. Heer's study; most of the rest of the letter simply fails, or refuses, to face up to Heer's argument.

Chairman Mao's compulsions can hardly be utilized to negate Heer's assertion of the intimate link between Christian anti-Semitism and the death-wishes of the Western world. The cogency of that assertion is, of course, subject to debate, but only by assessing the theory on its own merits and not by falling, as Monsignor Oesterreicher does, into obscurantism.

Monsignor Oesterreicher's fantasy that Heer ties together events "entirely unrelated to one another" points to more than a nominalistic bias respecting history. Monsignor Oesterreicher cannot grant that the machinations of the devil constitute an indivisible fabric. Why is the Monsignor totally silent on Heer's essential argument: the indictment of the Christian Gospel, historic Christianity, and Western and Eastern Christendom—realities that infinitely transcend the acts of "Christians"—for insuring the suffering and death of millions of Jews?

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The allegation that Heer does not foresee that his analysis can be given an anti-Semitic twist reflects a superficial and unfair reading of *God's First Love*. Heer's entire exposition reveals a scholar and a man who knows well that any and every disclosure of anti-Semitism is easily put to the service of anti-Semites. Evidently Monsignor Oesterreicher does not see that his very allegation against Heer is given embodiment in his own letter. For by furnishing information about the place of Jews in the development of atomic weapons, Monsignor Oesterreicher provides anti-Semites with very convenient data.

The Monsignor laments Heer's lack of attention to the State of Israel, yet nowhere does he acknowledge that the churches, through their complicity with the enemies of Israel, have acted to prevent Israel from becoming a decisive triumph over Hitler's "Final Solution."

The charge that Heer's work is possessed of an "unredeemed character" is a corrupting, if unwitting, service to Christian anti-Semitism. At this point Monsignor Oesterreicher is not only immensely more utopian than Heer (at least Heer has the good sense to recognize that the Christian church's redemption from anti-Semitism still lies in the future); but the Monsignor's foolish conclusion that "Heer's book begets despair" indicates more than ignorance of the author's theology of hope. The conclusion could be uttered only by someone who does not know the depths and power of the devil's conquest of the church, and hence the total revolution that is required if the anti-Semitism of Christianity is to be purged away.

Unlike Dr. Heer, Monsignor Oesterreicher is obviously incapable of bearing the truth that historic Christianity is inherently anti-Semitic. His complete silence respecting Heer's massive demonstration of the causal relationship between the Christian Gospel and anti-Semitism reflects his well-known, traditionalist presupposition that anti-Semitism is merely an aberration of Christianity rather than of the essence of Christianity. Few things give greater aid and comfort to Christian anti-Semites than the assurance that the church is redeemed. Monsignor Oesterreicher could have celebrated the prophetic contribution of a fellow-Christian scholar in the

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comprehension and melioration of anti-Semitism. (His *ad hominem* insinuation against Heer for "learning of the horrors from reports" is beneath contempt.) Through his silences the Monsignor only helps to perpetuate the ungodly self-defensiveness of the church respecting the satanic disease of anti-Semitism.

It is difficult to take Monsignor Clark's "fearful rubbish" seriously. . . . He carefully twists much of my reporting to make it appear that Dr. Heer's pen and mine are one and the same. With Monsignor Oesterreicher, Monsignor Clark conveniently hides the author's climactic expressions of hope for the church, as made clear in the review. In addition, Monsignor Clark irresponsibly suppresses my lengthy critique of the volume and charges Heer with conclusions that he never reaches. On these various counts, Monsignor Clark's response is seen to be very largely ludicrous.

More seriously, Monsignor Clark, with many American clerics, is so markedly retarded in his historical knowledge that his attempt to excuse the church is pitiful indeed. I suggest that, as proper penance, the Monsignor be required to study and digest Friedrich Heer's faithful chronicle of the church's age-long anti-Semitic behavior. There is surely no evidence in his letter that Monsignor Clark has the slightest first-hand acquaintance with Dr. Heer's book. The penitential exercise I propose will not guarantee, of course, that Monsignor Clark will stop wishing to invent history to suit his own purposes.

Most seriously, in this time after Auschwitz nothing but revulsion is fitting in the presence of those whose efforts to alter history are explicitly directed to the defense or rescue of the Christian church. Here is living evidence of our unregenerate refusal to face the truth about the church's place in the persecutions and murders of human beings, including, most horribly, her complicity in the Holocaust. There appears no other way to explain Monsignor Clark's rejection of the overwhelming lessons of historical scholarship. Rather than castigating Dr. Heer and his colleagues, Monsignor Clark and other Christians ought to be celebrating the contribution of this great Austrian Catholic Christian and his courage in summoning the churches to repentance. That Monsignor Clark chooses instead to vilify Friedrich Heer, and to slight through Heer the Jewish victims of our sins as Christians, is a telling vindication of a judgment made by Heer since the publication of his book: The present Vatican establishment is a "sect that has excommunicated itself, closed itself off from the process of the progressive humanization of mankind."

As adjudged in my review, Heer's study is "a powerful work of the first importance." The hope that his book will gain wide circulation, careful study, and significant influence is given additional moral urgency by the identity of those who now seek to discredit him.

Trade Unions

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I must correct a singularly unfortunate error which crept into Penn Kemble's article, "Rediscovering American Labor" [April]. Mr. Kemble writes of AFL-CIO objections "when labor officials from Communist countries assume leadership positions in international organizations like the ILO and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions." I must point out categorically that no labor official from a Communist country, or from a Communist-controlled trade-union organization, has assumed a leadership position or any other position in the ICFTU. Nor could such a question arise because Communist-controlled trade unions or such organizations from Communist countries cannot be members of the Confederation. Nor, to our knowledge, has the AFL-CIO ever made such an allegation. As its name implies, the ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) is a confederation of trade-union organizations free from state-control and it has not hesitated to expel members—like the Greek Confederation of Labor—when they were taken over by their governments.

The situation of the ICFTU must not be confused with the International Labor Organization—a United Nations agency—whose members are nation-states represented by tripartite delegations (government, employers, workers).

T. BARRY-BRAUNTHAL
ICFTU
Brussels, Belgium

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . On the basis of years of working with the leaders of organized labor and as Counsel to the New York State AFL-CIO, I can bear witness to labor's deep concern with broad social issues and to its effectiveness both in legislation and in public administration. . . .

Penn Kemble's thesis is sound beyond possible question. If intellectuals are to have effective influence they must win the mass support which only labor can furnish. And they can achieve such support only if they obtain labor's confidence, something labor, quite understandably in light of past history, will not yield readily.

It will not be enough for intellectuals to recognize and acknowledge the Park Avenue anti-union bias of John Lindsay or the limited understanding of John Doar. The intellectuals will have to look within themselves and rid themselves of the sense of superiority which leads them to think and to act as anointed leaders whom the man on the street had best follow both in his own and in the general interest. Close association with academicians and with those who call themselves intellectuals for an even longer time than with union leaders has led me to regard with greater respect the views and judgments of the latter on issues of public concern. . . .

HERMAN A. GRAY
Pine Plains, New York

PENN KEMBLE writes:

T. Barry-Braunthal is correct in pointing out that no Communist officials have assumed leadership positions in the ICFTU. I apologize if I gave the impression that the problems of AFL-CIO relations with the ICFTU are identical to the problems of AFL-CIO relations with the ILO.

In fairness, though, Mr. Barry-Braunthal is a bit too categorical in his denial of any difficulties over the question of Communist labor and the ICFTU. This is too complex a matter to discuss adequately in a letters column. But it should be said that differences between the AFL-CIO and at least some ICFTU affiliates have arisen from time to time, as the following quotation from an article by George Meany in the AFL-CIO *Free Trade Union News* (June 1965) may indicate:

The special efforts made by the

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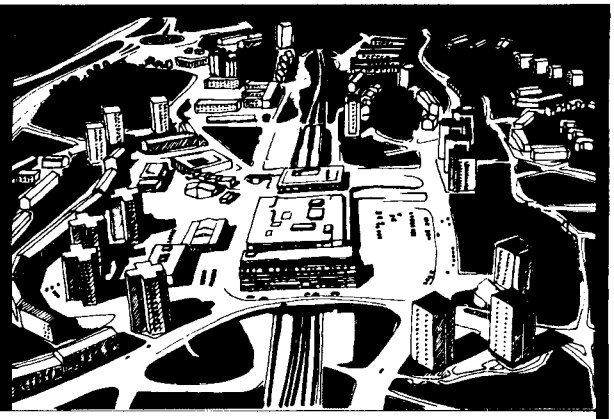
WFTU [the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Communist labor federation—P.K.] to penetrate the International Trade Secretariats of the ICFTU have not been entirely unsuccessful. For example, the ICFTU Mineworkers Trade Secretariat has been maneuvered into cooperating with the WFTU's so-called miners' trade-union international. The International Graphical Federation (ICFTU trade secretariat) has decided to accept the application for affiliation by the Communist-dominated CGT printing workers' organization.

Such actions hurt free trade-unionism everywhere and cannot be countenanced by the ICFTU. They are in crass violation of the decision of the ICFTU Executive Board (December 1964) that "it is the policy of the ICFTU to refuse to cooperate in any way with any ITS which may admit into affiliation any organization directly or indirectly affiliated to the WFTU."

Mark Twain & the Critics

To the Editor of Commentary:

Peter Shaw's review of *Mark Twain, An American Prophet* by Maxwell Geismar [Books in Review, March] is both mean and petty. It evades the issues. Mr. Shaw treats imperialism and the cold war as fictions made up by imaginative radicals. The result is that his criticism is disembodied, empty. Mr. Shaw never responds to Geismar's arguments; first, that Mark Twain denounced the atrocities of the American Empire, and second, that our attitude toward Twain has been distorted by the cultural and political atmosphere of the cold war. Mr. Shaw admits that the "Mark Twain controversy is a dispute about America," but he backs away from the real controversy. He's afraid to grapple with the issue of the cold war, the corrupt state of our academic criticism, and American racism and imperialism. Mr. Shaw tries to defuse Twain. He dredges up that awful Jamesian word—ambiguity—and tries to stick it on Twain. But it won't hold. Twain won't sit still like a good boy for Mr. Shaw to glue him down. Twain isn't ambiguous when it comes to denouncing modern American society. There is nothing opportunistic about this book, as Mr. Shaw suggests. Geismar does not appropriate "the fashionable leftism of the day." Rather, he brings Mark Twain to life. He shows us the Twain who



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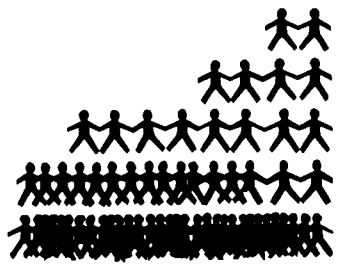

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was as enraged about the genocide of Third World peoples as today's revolutionaries are angry about the genocide committed by the United States in Southeast Asia. And Geismar shows us a Twain who, like today's hippies and yippies, took a real pagan joy in life.

Mr. Shaw is afraid of the real Twain and the flesh-and-blood Geismar. They both rock the boat, question the Establishment, and give us words which soar and explode. Mr. Shaw doesn't like strong emotions. We mustn't be too angry or too passionate, he says. The effect of his review is to demand that writers and critics be well-behaved. Mr. Shaw glides over the sickness of American culture. The critics of the 50's rewrote our literary history to conform to the status quo. Mr. Shaw apologizes for them. He's one of them. He tries, but he can't kill Geismar's Mark Twain, a living artist, and no academic corpse.

JONAH RASKIN
Department of English
State University of New York
Stony Brook, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Peter Shaw's review contains a few errors. My book, *Mark Twain on the Damned Human Race,* which he mentions, is not a collection of Twain's "social and political observations"—such a book would run to several volumes—"especially his attacks on American capitalism." There is nothing in it about American capitalism. It is rather a comparative study of civilizations, including Mark Twain's most savage attacks on the human race, with special, unloving attention to its white-skinned branch, and attacks on several nations, one of which is the United States. By no means is this material, as Mr. Shaw imagines, all in Mark Twain's collected works.

Some cruel joker has also misinformed Mr. Shaw about the Brooks-de Voto fight. This is not a small matter. Van Wyck Brooks, in his *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* (1920), presented the first and still living portrait of Mark Twain the arch villain, the failure, the ignoramus, the mercenary, the hypocrite, the henpecked husband (he was guilty of respecting his wife), and above all the writer who was guilty of regarding writers as craftsmen, and not, like Mr. Brooks (and Matthew Arnold before him), as divinely inspired leaders of society. Bernard de Voto, then literary editor of the Mark Twain papers, made his devastating reply in *Mark Twain's America* (1932). After that it was no contest. So powerful a man was Brooks, and so meek a lot are critics, that to a man they lined up behind Brooks and for half a century now have been elaborating his nonsense. Mr. Shaw is only the latest to do so. . . . De Voto never changed his mind (I have no space to discuss the complicated myth that he did) and the collective mind of our critics has never changed either. In fact, I will make Mr. Shaw an abject apology if he can name one critic who, during and after the "controversy," wholeheartedly defended de Voto and, by implication, Mark Twain. I will also send him a list almost as long as the telephone book of critics who have reverently endorsed and followed Brooks's line—and lo! Mr. Shaw's name shall lead all the rest.

Then there is Mr. Shaw's statement that Mark Twain's "greatest admirers have to admit that he never experienced a true 'rebirth' of his creative powers" after 1896. Those powers had never died. In fact, the pattern of the criticism has long been to compare one period of Mark Twain with another period—it doesn't matter with which—and to deplore one or the other. . . . But since Mr. Shaw has chosen to deplore his later work, let me note that *Letters from the Earth* was done in his last years and—but I shall quote from that to illustrate the work of a man who Mr. Shaw imagines was a "self censoring Victorian about sex." This is from the report of an angel visiting earth and reporting back to heaven.

> The human being, like the immortals, naturally places sexual intercourse far and away above all other joys. . . . The very thought of it excites him; opportunity sets him wild; in this state he will risk life, reputation, everything—even his queer heaven itself—to make good that opportunity and ride it to its overwhelming climax. . . . They prize it thus highly; yet, like all their so-called "boons," it is a poor thing. At its very best and longest the act is brief beyond imagination—the imagination of an immortal, I mean.

This, like so much of Mark Twain, was unpublishable at the time, so I trust I shall not hear from Mr. Shaw on Mark Twain's grave character deficiencies in not sending it off posthaste to the *North American Review.*

Further: Mark Twain wrote *Following the Equator* in the very year of his daughter's death, that last and worst of the private misfortunes which are supposed to have caused, or marked, the decline of his power. That book is the tale of Africa, India, Australia, and New Zealand, and, of course—since it is by Mark Twain—of all the world beside. His admirers admire it immensely. In the remainder of his life he produced, among other things, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," . . . "Concerning the Jews" . . , and *Christian Science,* in which Mary Baker Eddy is shown as a greedy illiterate (no such thing could be published nowadays) and her religion as a successful faith cure. I know no more brilliant Twain. Along with that he also wrote in his last years "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," "What is Man?" . . . and, of course, all versions of *The Mysterious Stranger. . . .*

Since Mr. Shaw knows so much, he doubtless knows too that on three occasions (one in a private conversation) Mark Twain is known to have lost his temper and damned universal suffrage. No life, and no literature, has been so thoroughly combed for misdemeanors as Mark Twain's.

And yet, in some respects Mr. Shaw is wholly uninformed. For the "scholars and editors" who, he thinks, have "patiently explained" that Mark Twain's *Autobiography,* as created, would "add up to an utterly unwieldy and unreadable book" are in the process of bringing that book out, precisely as Mark Twain wrote and dictated it. They will be discouraged to know that it is unreadable. They are, of course, Frederick Anderson, and other editors of the Mark Twain papers—the only people who have seen the full *Autobiography.*

It is true that Mark Twain lived in "plutocratic luxury." I find it difficult, but not impossible, to believe that Mr. Shaw seriously considers this fact literary criticism.

JANET SMITH
New York City

PETER SHAW writes:

My colleague Jonah Raskin says that I "evade the issues" and "never respond to Geismar's arguments." He repeats Geismar's

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assertions, saying first that I treat them "as fictions made up by imaginative radicals," then that I ignore them, and finally that I am "afraid to grapple" with them. Each of Geismar's claims about Mark Twain certainly did imply all that Professor Raskin assumes: that America is a racist-imperialist-genocidal state and that its sick cold-war culture is typified by academic corruption and worship of the status quo. Instead of arguing with the items in this familiar indictment I showed how Geismar failed to make a case for any of them. When Professor Raskin repeats the claim that Twain denounced "the genocide of Third World peoples" he fails, as did Geismar, to square this statement with Twain's support of the Spanish-American War. When he repeats the assertion that Twain "took a real pagan joy in life" he does not explain, if this was so, why Twain was so genteel a prude that his sense of social propriety led him, when Maxim Gorky was traveling with a mistress, to refuse to see him, even though Gorky sought Twain's help in raising money in the United States for Russian revolutionary causes.

Professor Raskin concludes that "Twain is not ambiguous when it comes to denouncing modern American society"; but these contradictions would seem to suggest "that awful Jamesian word—ambiguity." I used the term in the sense that Professor Raskin uses it in his article, "Henry James and the French Revolution" in which he writes that "James's attitude toward his own society is colored by . . . ambiguities." It should be noted in Professor Raskin's favor that in the same article he writes that "It is quite misleading to speak of Henry James, as Maxwell Geismar does, as a 'royalist.' "

Professor Raskin suggests that his state of mind is one of high spirits which I would have him abate: "The effect of Mr. Shaw's review," he writes, "is to demand that writers and critics be well-behaved." Herein lies his fantasy (his conviction that there exist "imperialism and the cold war" is quite sound). If asked to prescribe for Professor Raskin I would not ask that he be well-behaved, whatever that phrase may mean when applied to writing, but that he adopt occasionally some of the simpler rules of reasoned discourse.

I cited Miss Smith's book in my review to refute Maxwell Geismar's support of the claim by Russian critics that Mark Twain's social writings had been "suppressed." In his preface to her book Geismar notes that it is "mainly . . . concerned with the themes of social justice, of American civilization in its dawning age of imperialism . . . and of the sinful nature of man in general" and he indicates that it provides American readers with the texts which the Russians had in mind. Since, in addition, the writings in Miss Smith's collection provide many of the examples of Mark Twain as a radical in Geismar's book, I noted that Geismar was wrong to charge that they had been suppressed (I should have written that the texts were all in collected editions of Twain *and* Miss Smith's collection). That Twain, not cold-war critics, suppressed his own work is not part of a lecture on "grave character deficiencies" but simply a fact. I contested the notion that Twain was a political radical, so that I quite agree with Miss Smith when she says that he does not appear as one in her book. (If anyone cares to check page 88 of my review he will see that the phrases "social and political observations" and "especially . . . American capitalism" do not refer to Miss Smith's book but appear in the sentence previous to the one which mentions her, where they refer to the charges of the Russian critics).

My descriptions of Mark Twain as a self-censoring Victorian about sex, a worshiper of the English class system, an opponent of universal suffrage, and a pursuer of a life of plutocratic luxury were offered neither in denigration of Twain nor as "literary criticism." Geismar called Twain an "enraged radical"; I simply showed that the evidence contradicted him. Miss Smith will have to argue with Geismar about the first three descriptions of Twain, for as I said in my review, they are his.

Mark Twain wrote a number of memorable works during his last period, it is true. As Miss Smith's descriptions show, however, these were by and large not imaginative works but discursive ones: that is why his critics have been agreed that Twain "never experienced a true 'rebirth' of his *creative* powers." Nor do these writings support the contention that Twain was a consistent anti-imperialist. It is in *Following the Equator,* in fact, that Twain, and here I quote Maxwell Geismar, "could not quite attack either the Indian ruling classes or their English masters. Here, strangely, was no mention of the white man's imperialism and exploitation. . . . He even admired and flattered the Indian princes who in turn feted and courted him during the tour. Commenting only that English rule had been better for India than native Indian rule . . . Clemens in fact became almost sentimental in his Anglophiliac rationalizations."

The editors of the scholarly edition of Twain's autobiography that is in preparation should perhaps be allowed to speak for themselves, but nowhere in the prospectuses do they suggest that their volumes are intended to turn out as a good read. As Miss Smith notes, these editors are the only ones who have studied the full text of the autobiography; that was why I objected to Geismar's praising what he could not have read.

Miss Smith offers to supply a long list of critics who supported Van Wyck Brooks. It is interesting that what she considers to have been a unanimity of opinion against de Voto does not suggest to her that de Voto may have been wrong. The "meekness" of these critics, she explains, prevented them from speaking out for de Voto. But why would radical critics hesitate to support him? I offer Miss Smith the following partial list of my own self-styled radical critics who, in her sense, supported Brooks against de Voto: Matthew Josephson, Newton Arvin, Max Eastman, F. O. Matthiessen, Dwight Macdonald. Miss Smith offers me an abject apology if I can name "one critic who wholeheartedly defended de Voto" against Brooks. The name is DeLancey Ferguson, who in 1939 wrote: "I do not . . . just . . . refute Mr. Brooks. After Mr. de Voto got through with him, Mr. Brooks resembled Jacob Blivens, the Good Little Boy whom nitroglycerine so diffused over five counties that it was necessary to hold five separate inquests to prove that he was dead."

FDR

To the Editor of Commentary:

It is unfortunate that in his perceptive review of James MacGregor Burns's *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom* [Books in Review, April] R. H. S. Crossman, himself no

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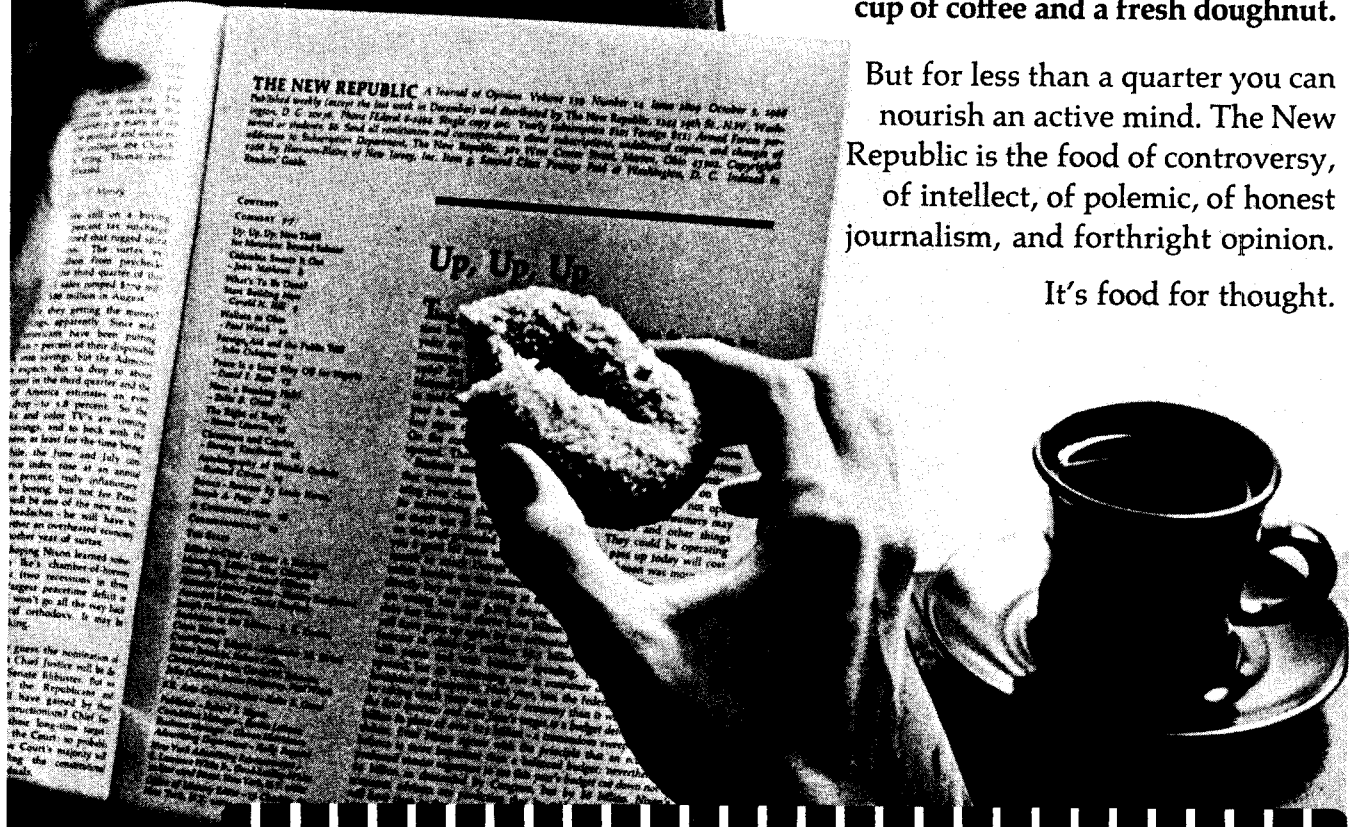

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stranger to Jewish and Zionist affairs, did not mention—among the faults which both he and Professor Burns found with FDR—Roosevelt's wariness of rescue efforts and his inability to face the problem of "the millions of Jewish men, women, and children trapped in the Nazi heartland and headed for the gas chambers."

According to Burns, FDR's reluctance stemmed from the sheer intractability of the problem, as well as from the war strategy based on the principle of unconditional surrender. "The fact that so many of the imperiled people abroad and the exhorting leaders at home were Jews, made Roosevelt nervous about the reaction of Congress and of some elements among the people." After all, Hadley Cantril's analysis of the public-opinion polls had shown that in the midst of the war against Nazism, anti-Semitism among the American people seemed more widespread than before the war.

On the other hand, there was Moslem hostility, and with the heavy military and diplomatic involvement in North Africa, the President did not wish to antagonize the Moslems who were hostile to the rescue of Jews, as well as to Zionist aspirations.

SHLOMO SHAFIR
New York City

Two Movements

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Michael A. Meyer coupled two movements, Ethical Culture and Reconstructionism, in his article "Beyond Particularism" [March], which have only superficial similarities but profound differences. Indeed, they may be said to be antithetical, since Ethical Culture sought to reduce Jewish particularism to the vanishing point while Reconstructionism bases its entire thesis upon the proposition that there is purpose and meaning to Jewish existence. Felix Adler made the mistake of assuming, as many Reform Jewish leaders did, that Judaism was a religion, a creed; and since he could not accept that creed, he had to withdraw from Judaism and launch a movement "beyond" it and all other creedal faiths. Mordecai Kaplan, on the other hand, found much in the tradition which he could not accept, but he believed (and still believes) that Judaism, as an evolving religious civilization, does not depend for its vitality upon the specific theological formulation of any one era, and can, like all other civilizations, reconstruct itself in terms of contemporary experience.

He is not the first, nor is he the only thinker who has recognized that Judaism has universal implications; but he and they contend that the route to universalism is *by way of* particularism. In the realm of ethics and religious philosophy, a doctrine to be accepted must be true—or at least not conflict with known truths, and in that respect must be universally applicable. But when religious philosophy and ethics are to be translated into laws and social institutions, they must partake of the character of a group. That is how cultures have developed, out of the specific and individual experiences of specific groups, whether they be clans, tribes, nations, or peoples.

Perhaps that is why Ethical Culture has not flourished as its founder would have hoped: it was not rooted in the particularism of a civilization. It sought to be universal not only in content but in form as well. It was thus deprived of the *sancta* which a group creates and around which its people develop emotional associations. It is true that Reconstructionism has had trouble getting off the ground organizationally; but (as I have attempted to demonstrate in a series of articles in the *Reconstructionist*, a critique of Charles Liebman's study), the problem has been of a different nature. Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism, resisted translating Reconstructionism into structures of synagogues, schools, fellowships, etc., hoping that his basic conception of Judaism would infiltrate the existing movements and influence them. When it became apparent that Reconstructionism could not hope to perpetuate itself this way, and that its influence was either diluted or distorted when applied by others, he consented to make of Reconstructionism a movement.

Professor Liebman's contention that Reconstructionism cannot succeed as a movement, because, allegedly, its approved ideas have already been adopted and those disapproved of have been discarded is, to say the least, premature. Indeed, he himself declares that the establishment of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College may yet give the lie to his analysis. I suppose expert sociologists back in 1917 would have said the same thing about Zionism; it had no future as a political movement, but its goal of revitalizing Jewish consciousness was not controversial and might already have been accepted—at least in theory.

But whether Reconstructionism develops and grows, or withers away, of one thing we may be sure: it always fought the kind of universalism which involved the dissolution of the Jewish people and its culture. To say, as Mr. Meyer does, that "Kaplan might have led a later generation of American Jews down a path very similar to Adler's" is unmitigated nonsense. It was not the East European Jews whose "intense national feeling" prevented a universalist Kaplan from succeeding. On the contrary, it was an intensely nationalist Kaplan who brought to the East European Jews and others—all equally hell-bent on assimilation—a new rationale for their creative survival.

(RABBI) IRA EISENSTEIN
President, Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There is evidence in Michael A. Meyer's article of careful and even appreciative reading of my book, *Toward Common Ground*. Nevertheless, and despite a certain gratitude, there are matters in Mr. Meyer's essay that call for reply.

Most troubling is the suggestion that Ethical Culture ". . . represents an attempt to escape from the odium of Jewishness." The bias introduced by the word "odium" afflicts the remainder of a thoughtful essay. Implicit is the notion that reasonable people might find this description of Judaism fair. An anti-Semite might well indulge in such usage. For the rest of us, however, the ascription of "odium" masks certain genuine issues, e.g., the relevance of Judaism's "tribal" heritage on an impacted globe; the pressure of Jewish organizationists toward exclusive identity and loyalty; the validity of Judaism's implicit theology in today's world. These are matters for rational discourse—something blocked by pejorative labels. One might, for example, regard Judaism as simply wrong in certain crucial ways without regarding it as odious.

Mr. Meyer does move on to

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more objective considerations. For example, he interprets Ethical Culture as a critical response to Jewish particularism—and in this he is correct. But that response may well be warranted rather than just the outcome of some less than conscious reaction calling for "escape." Thus, a case can be made—and a good one—that in our complex world, particularism is not merely outdated but destructive. This, of course, makes the problem of achieving meaningful identity quite difficult. But, one does not achieve identity under threats (overt or covert) of treason to the fathers, appeals to guilt, etc.

If a critique of Jewish particularism is *one* of the motivations for Ethical Culture, it is by no means the only one. Mr. Meyer's treatment of the reaction to particularism is challenged by the evidence. For example, it is doubtful at best to assert that Felix Adler or his early followers (like the Seligmans, the Morgenthaus, the Sutros) felt "deprivation" as Jews, though one might perhaps make some case for psychological and social deprivation. . . . Moreover, the tendency of many non-practicing and even heretical Jews in the presence of oppression has been to move back toward Judaism—not for religious but for moral reasons. At least this has been my experience with the kinds of people who join Ethical Culture. . . .

The stress on "particularism" as a reason for departure tends to undervalue other equally cogent reasons for rejecting Judaism. Adler's own rejection of theism is cited, but one might add—and with more emphasis than in the article—the influence of "evolution" and the biological sciences, and on the affirmative side the desire to make moral action the center of religious faith without carrying along an outworn theological baggage. Mr. Meyer's suggestion that "universalism" serves as an adequate counterweight to Jewish particularism in understanding the motivations for Ethical Culture misses out on Adler's own development. Thus, while it is true that, at age twenty-three, Adler spoke in the universalistic language of Jewish Reform, somewhat later he was developing alternatives to particularism without the abstractness of universalism. The upshot was Ethical Culture's personalism . . . that identity, including religious identity, was to be developed by the self in the interaction with other selves, and was not to be discovered in *any* corporate or collective entities. One might question the psychological adequacy of this proposal but that does not reduce its importance in Adler's reasoning.

In trying to make his point, Mr. Meyer tends to downplay the role of non-Jewish sources in Adler's and Ethical Culture's evolution. Thus, he expresses his doubts about the Emersonian influence on the movement. While it is true that Adler stressed his departures from Emerson, he nevertheless gave Emerson a central place in his own growth. . . .

A few institutional comments may not be amiss. Thus, Mr. Meyer comments accurately on the prevalence of German Reform Jews in the founding and first years of Ethical Culture—but again, I'm afraid, he tends to turn a conjunction into an implication. For example, in the context of his position, one would be hard pressed to account for the centrality of German free-thinkers in the founding of the St. Louis Society in 1886. And while it is true that first-generation Jews of East-European origin were not exactly prominent in Ethical Culture, it is not true that second- and third-generation Jews of similar origin are equally invisible. Quite the contrary is the case—though the Jewish background has become rather attenuated and certainly less significant biographically by this time.

The suspicion that a conscious or nonconscious desire for universalism led Ethical Culture to select Christians with clerical training for its first group of professional Leaders may be warranted—though how one can demonstrate this is a problem. If it was overt, then some record should exist—but does not. If covert, and a result of subconscious motivation, then no record can exist by definition. But to propose an alleged empirical proposition which by definition is non-verifiable is not really to propose any proposition at all. . . .

Let me return finally to the question of "escape" as it applies in more recent history. After nearly twenty years of observation—during which the "accusation" of escape has indeed been made more than once, though not as felicitously as by Mr. Meyer—I can only conclude that if Ethical Culture is an "escape" from Judaism it is a very poor one indeed. Those choosing this rather doubtful path are double-damned—first for seeking to escape; secondly for having been caught at it. Certainly Ethical Culture has not sought to establish a role as an escape mechanism. Its members of Jewish origin do not, by and large, change their names for more "acceptable" ones; Sunday School and adult-education programs include an appreciative attention to sources including Old Testament study; Ethical Societies include a recognition of Jewish holidays among others (at least for awareness of the cultural environment if not for committed participation); and social action programs are undertaken cooperatively with a variety of agencies including Jewish ones. . . .

Human motivations are complex enough so that there must be some truth in Mr. Meyer's analysis. Yet what I miss most is a grasp of the affirmative motivations for Ethical Culture (whatever the outcome with respect to its survival as a religious movement). When we begin to look in that direction we find some questions that need genuine religious response, e.g., how shall a man live a meaningful life in the new world of large numbers, massive impersonal powers, and corporate organizations? That kind of question more than any other was the central one of Ethical Culture's origin and its present efforts. That this question needs exploration by all of us need not be argued. Perhaps Ethical Culture has some useful reply; perhaps it does not. But we cannot begin to know that if we trap ourselves into apologia for the sources of our being and engage in a species of historical reductionism.

HOWARD B. RADEST
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Michael A. Meyer's article distinctly merits appreciation and attention. . . . In respect to Ethical Culture, however, I think it is still important to put the same facts and questions into a somewhat broader perspective. "Universalism" and liberation from "particularism," as tendencies in the American religious scene (during Felix Adler's student years in the late 1860's and early 70's), were not, of course, confined to Jewish circles. In 1867 the Free Religious Association arose as a universaliz-

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ing departure from Unitarianism, led by liberals (especially from New England) who proposed to transcend specifically Christian and also Unitarian particularism. Felix Adler mentioned this movement in his one and only sermon at Temple Emanu-El, in 1873, and he was clearly encouraged by such thinking to entertain the possibility of newly purposeful, yet "creedless" religion. From 1878-82, that is, only two years after the launching of the Society for Ethical Culture in 1876, he served as president of the Free Religious Association. None of this is incompatible with the view that "escape from the odium of Jewishness" played a part, great or small, in Ethical Culture, but it extends the range of factors that shaped the course of that movement. The first associates who are mentioned by Mr. Meyer as joining in Ethical Culture's leadership—William MacIntyre Salter, S. Burns Weston, and Stanton Coit—were not sought out by Adler, but came to him in the course of their own universalizing escapes, from Congregationalism in Salter's case and from Unitarianism in Weston's. Coit had not studied for the ministry. That other men, some of Jewish stock, came into Ethical Culture leadership in the next two generations, but from secular rather than from seminary education, is significant yet may suggest a diminishing importance of escape motives.

With regard to the final question of "survival," I agree with Mr. Meyer that it would be illusory to suppose that a universalizing religious movement can long and strongly survive mainly on the basis of escape from *any* particularism. I believe he touches a more vital point for the survival of Ethical Culture when he alludes to its "falling victim to the plague of excessive abstraction." Ethical Culture was never as centered in Felix Adler's personal philosophy as Reconstructionism appears to have been in Mordecai Kaplan's doctrines. The question of survival for Ethical Culture turns critically, in my view, on whether its doctrinal openness, its universalism, can freshly combine, again and again, with constructive initiatives in matters of education, social affairs, sustaining life values and life styles. The productive character of such combination in the movement's past no doubt came out of particular historic conditions, in which escape from Jewish particularism was but one strand that appears to diminish in importance.

HORACE L. FRIESS
New York Society for Ethical Culture
New York City

MICHAEL A. MEYER writes:

The Ethical Culture respondents, it seems, are perfectly happy to be beyond particularism and are simply concerned to justify their universalism. Rabbi Eisenstein, by contrast, is scandalized by the comparison and wants to present Reconstructionism's particularist credentials. He and the Ethical Union's director share a high degree of institutional defensiveness.

Mr. Radest is needlessly troubled by my reference to the "odium of Jewishness." My point was only that the lot of the Jew seemed odious to many who sought refuge from it in universalism, surely not that it represents a fair description of Judaism. On the other hand, to call Judaism's heritage "tribal" seems to me not only odious but grossly ignorant.

It is certainly true that in a period of aggravated oppression the tendency is toward a reassertion of particularism (though the counter-tendency is also present, making for a polarization). The reason is simple enough! Virulent hatred directed against a group with which one at least vaguely still identifies tends to strengthen that identification. It also eliminates the possibility of transcending particularism. One either casts one's lot with the persecuted or with the oppressor. Had the 1870's in America been a period of intense anti-Semitism, it is unlikely that Ethical Culture would have come into existence. But it is just as unlikely to have been born where Jews were not a minority.

Mr. Radest's main concern, however, is to show that Ethical Culture was motivated not only by the rejection of Jewish particularism but by other factors as well. Motives are indeed complex, and there is no reason to doubt that Adler and his followers had many and various ones, including—though in most instances secondarily—the intellectual and theological objections to Judaism which Mr. Radest lists. But by Adler's time the Jewish community had already become so multilithic that without the seductive vision of an untrammeled universalism—or, if you like, a universalized "personalism"—the attraction of Ethical Culture for Jews remains unexplained.

I am grateful to Mr. Friess for his supplementary comments regarding the American religious scene and its influence on Adler. I find it refreshing that Mr. Friess, unlike his colleague, explicitly acknowledges the role played by the perceived odium of Jewishness. That there were other factors as well I have already agreed. In response to the last part of Mr. Friess's letter, I would only emphasize that my analysis of motivation dealt with the first generation, not with the present membership of the Society.

If Reconstructionism and Ethical Culture were *obviously* alike I would not have made their similarities the point of my article. It is precisely because the parallels are not obvious and "superficial" that I wanted to bring them to light. I shall not restate the remarkable structural analogies or the striking similarities in terminology, which Rabbi Eisenstein does not dispute. His principal objection is to the suggestion that Reconstructionism represents a diminution of Jewish particularism. My contention here is based on Mordecai Kaplan's rejection of the Chosen People concept, the most particularistic of all Jewish doctrines. Even the Reformers were not willing to abandon that idea entirely. Geiger wrote of a unique Jewish genius for religion and distinguished the Jews as "the people of revelation." The "Mission of Israel," however universalized in its objectives, was conceived as the imposition of divine will, not as a self-appointed task. It is true that Kaplan did emphasize the religious and cultural value of preserving the Jewish people—and this importantly differentiates him from Adler. But he shifted Jewish survival from divine imperative to human desire. Thus the sentence which Rabbi Eisenstein distorts by quoting only the second half makes eminently good sense: "Had it not been for his own and his followers' emotional loyalty to Judaism, Kaplan might have led a later generation of American Jews down a path very similar to Adler's." Because of his intense feeling for the Jewish people and its civilization, he did not in fact do so. But Kaplan's theology went a long way in that direction.

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What's Left?

Roger Starr

UNLESS one experiences a sudden conversion, one of those emotional thunderclaps after which the world changes color before one's eyes, the process of shifting one's attitudes toward familiar institutions and policies hardly strikes one's attention more noticeably than the gradual process by which, we are told, the cells of the body replace themselves. One's friends, nonetheless, delight in marking these changes; I have lately been informed by several of mine that I have clearly become very old intellectually, and veered shockingly to the Right. By coincidence, no doubt, this information was provided most recently by a man to whom I had been on the point of observing that he was becoming childish and that his political thinking had turned regressive. Which of us was right? What is Left?

For me, as for so many who were young in the 1930's, the idea of what is Left was formed at a time when one out of every four workingmen in the nation was unemployed, when the Western farmlands were blowing away, when both the trade and the agriculture of the country were in a state of disastrous decay, when a fairly rigid class system still marked most of American society, when the Spanish Civil War was raging, when Nazism and Fascism were on the rise.

It seems to be current mythology that in the 1930's all educated Americans were on the Left. This is nonsense. A second contemporary myth is that all those who held leftist sympathies were also members at one time or another of the Communist party, or one of its countless front groups. This also is nonsense. The "Communist Party U.S.A." did indeed exert a considerable pull on Americans who accepted the leftist canons which I will describe below. It did so because the party was connected with a genuine source of temporal power, namely the Soviet Union; and the same circumstance forced all those affiliated with the party to accept Russian direction on international policy. Yet if there is one subject on which leftists have generally been unable to reach accord, it is on matters of international policy. The current near-unanimity of leftist opposition to the American role in Vietnam has helped many to forget that never before have American leftists been able to agree on what is an imperialist war or on what position they should take with regard to any other war.

On principles of domestic policy, however—and it is exclusively these to which I will devote my attention here—there was among people who considered themselves Left in the 1930's, from the Social Democrats all the way over to the Trotskyites, a remarkable measure of agreement. I suggest that there were four general propositions which all of us on the Left accepted, even if we did not accept them explicitly. They were sufficiently precise to distinguish us from others who adhered to other social philosophies, and yet sufficiently vague so that we could agree on them and still disagree—in a mood of deadly enmity rising even to violence—on strategy, tactics, and most important of all, on whether the values we proclaimed had in fact been achieved on earth in any actual governmental system or program. The tenets were these:

First, we were proudly materialistic in the sense that we judged social and political programs primarily in terms of their power to increase the supply of goods and services available to those who now had less than a fair share.

Second, we rejected the profit motive as inhumane in itself and as an inefficient force for the production and distribution of goods and services.

Third, we believed that work was good and natural, that everyone wanted to work, and that the best instrument for putting an end to the exploitation of those who worked was the labor union—an institution to which we accordingly attributed a special social value.

Fourth, we believed that racial problems in an industrial world were, at bottom, economic, and that if economic problems could be solved, racial problems would cease to exist.

This is what it meant to be Left in the 1930's. What remains alive of this catechism today?

ROGER STARR, whose contributions to COMMENTARY include "The Aristocrat in Local Politics" (January 1971), "Consciousness III" (December 1970), and "John V. Lindsay: A Political Portrait" (February 1970), is executive director of the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council of New York, Inc.

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II

THE materialism of the Left in the 1930's consisted, quite simply, in the conviction that economic needs came first. This idea did not exclude other values—cultural, communal, educational, aesthetic. In fact, many leftists looked upon freedom from economic want as merely a necessary first step in freeing the mind and spirit for "higher" things. But priority was nevertheless given to the economic needs. And no one on the Left doubted that those needs were capable of being universally satisfied. Thus, for all its moments of depression, and despite the dire strategies of those leftist factions which saw a "final conflict" or a violent revolution as the only road to the achievement of the materialist goal, the American Left in the 1930's was essentially optimistic. It assumed that the human population had already become stable in the industrialized countries, and would eventually be stabilized even in the colonies. And it assumed, in addition, that the supply of raw materials on earth would be sufficient to take care of all the reasonable needs of the entire population of the earth. Leftists in the 1930's, in short, were enthusiastically anti-Malthusian, believing (on sound historical grounds) that Malthus was a bogey man on whom the English gentry had relied in an effort to protect their property from encroachment by a rising proletariat.

In all this the Left was supported by the demographers of the time who assured everyone that the American population had leveled off at 130 million and would grow no further; by the stagnant birth rates of the European countries; and by its own theories of imperialism according to which overpopulation in the colonies was a direct consequence of exploitation. Where raw materials were concerned, the situation was even more reassuring, because there was a general consensus on the Left that any shortage of raw materials could be ascribed to the deliberate policies of the monopoly capitalists who controlled them and who, in order to augment their profits, were always creating unnecessary scarcity. The pollution of air and water scarcely seemed a problem in a time of economic depression. Factories that were not working produced no smoke, and there was a faint undercurrent of feeling with respect to appeals or crusades on behalf of smoke and pollution abatement (and such appeals were made from time to time) that their real intent was to increase the pressure on the working population to accept low wages by diminishing opportunities for employment.

It is hardly necessary to recite in detail what has overtaken these two optimistic assumptions that sustained the materialist faith of the 1930's Left. In a sentence, Malthus rolled over in his grave and rose to walk among us. Within a few years after World War II the demographers were announcing that the population of America, far from having leveled off, was growing and that its growth would continue. Soon it became clear that certain material benefits—some goods such as housing and many services like education—were incapable of indefinite expansion, or could only be expanded at serious cost to their quality and therefore to their ability to satisfy the needs they were designed to satisfy. Soon, too, it became clear that the second optimistic assumption of the 1930's Left—that the supply of raw materials was adequate to take care of the material needs of all—might also have to be reexamined. The pollution of natural resources and the depletion of raw materials could not fairly be dismissed as problems peculiar to monopoly capitalism—for they were as serious if not more serious in non-capitalist countries; they now had to be seen as consequences of the attempt to supply more goods and services while keeping prices low enough to remain within the economic capabilities of more and more people.

IF IT no longer seems possible to provide larger and fairer shares of goods and services to all, the materialist primacy of the 1930's Left must be fatally compromised. And so, indeed, it has been for many who regard themselves as leftists today. Such contemporary leftists have tended to take two alternative tacks. One has been to pass over the problem of providing material benefits altogether and to concentrate instead on other issues. Thus, for example, there are those who believe that "community control" of inadequate resources will somehow compensate for the fact of their inadequacy, or that the major tragedy of insufficient income is the "stigma" that poverty entails. My own observation of the results of these brief flights over material needs is that they leave all concerned dissatisfied. The advocates of community control suddenly find upon winning that they have been given custody of an empty bag, while the "stigma" attached to poverty turns out to reside largely in the eyes of those not poor themselves. As a substitute for the hard job of distributing goods and services more equitably than we have so far done, this dematerialization of materialism simply will not serve.

A second, contrary tendency of those who feel the traditional materialism of the Left compressing itself under the weight of too many people is to turn away from the immediate material needs of the living population and concentrate their attention in effect on the population of the future by emphasizing the issue of the heritage of natural resources we are passing on to the generations to come.

In the 1930's, there was at best an uneasy truce between conservationists (the precursors of the environmentalists of today) and those who saw the primary social and political problem as the widest possible distribution of greater material

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benefits. The conservationists were not only non-leftists, they were anti-leftist both in intellectual analysis and in style, and the language with which the two groups addressed each other was far from friendly. Today the environmental movement acts and talks in the style of the Left and is often taken both by itself and by others as a movement of the Left—an identification made easier by the fact that large private corporations offer themselves as the movement's most obvious and immediate targets. But as anti-Semitism has been described as the socialism of fools so at least one wing of the environmental movement might be described as the socialism of cherubs: to this wing man alone of all the creatures on earth is vile and he alone has illegitimate needs and wants. This element of anti-humanism may not characterize the entire environmental movement, but neither does that movement contribute anything to meeting the primary challenge posed by the need of so many human creatures in the present for a higher and more generous standard of living.

Although only a fool would categorically deny that the natural environment is imperilled by the demands placed on it by a constantly growing population, it should, I think, be impossible for anyone who calls himself a person of the Left to accept the idea that the way to save the natural environment is by cutting consumption on the part of those who already consume the least, whose homes are derelict, whose diet is inadequate, whose health services, clothing, recreational opportunities are grossly deficient. Even while the environmental movement walks and talks like a new and more advanced incarnation of the Left, its unconcern and even contempt for what I have described as the first tenet of leftism makes it look more like an Old Right than a New Left. For from any perspective which deserves to be called Left the problem with respect to the natural environment is surely how to make some people cut back while others move forward. Politically this poses almost exactly the same problems of production and distribution that the emphasis on material values posed forty years ago. As many different answers will appear today as appeared in the 1930's, and it is likely that along this front the most important political action of the next forty years will unfold. But wherever the "correct" answer may lie, it will not be found by following those who feel that they have solved the mystery that ties man to nature by raising a banner entitled Zero Growth. For many, and especially for the relatively deprived, Zero Growth means continued deprivation and the eventual doom of hope.

III

The second mark of the Left in the 1930's was the belief that the profit motive was both inhumane and inefficient as a force for the production and distribution of goods. Each faction on the Left developed its own recipe for the form of enterprise which would replace profit-motivated private capitalism; each faction had its own prescription for the way in which the future would come to succeed the present. It is a source of melancholy amusement to recognize that the contemporary Left has replaced the fascinating complexities of the Old Left's strategic disputation with a simple question: Should one work within the System or outside it? We have already discussed what has happened to materialism, and this current question apparently presages the fate of dialectic.

In any case, to understand the Left's troubles over private enterprise it is hardly necessary once again to recount the economic disasters of the 1930's, nor to recall the extent to which the American economy was totally a matter of private business activity at the time. No one suggested that the Depression of 1929 followed Herbert Hoover's game plan; the problem was that Herbert Hoover hadn't any, and thought he didn't need one. Today the impression of private capitalism has changed somewhat, even on the Left. It is no longer open to criticism—or at least, as we shall see, it has not been until lately—on the grounds of incapacity. On the contrary, it has lately been attacked for being all too competent, not merely in its productivity, which is now seen rather as something dangerous, but in its ability to accomplish what in the 1930's it set itself above all to resist or conceal: the apparent intervention of government in its behalf.

The second part of the general leftist distrust of private profit in the 1930's was more complex, and went to the issue of whether the profit motive permitted humane performance. In the 1930's, the failure of private-for-profit production to put people to work, or to find a better use for pigs, while men hungered, than to slaughter them and bury their bodies, excited moral repugnance. And this moral repugnanace was reinforced by the general recognition that private entrepreneurs had been responsible in the past for the rigor and cruelty of the period of capital accumulation. American industrialists—whose trail had not been broken by feudal and hereditary aristocratic predecessors—had, we believed, imposed their own hierarchical order on this virgin territory, acquiring for their own use the natural wealth of an untapped continent, exploiting the workers, importing slaves from across the ocean, and devising a caste system that continued to accomplish their economic ends long after slavery had legally been abolished.

Although the double indictment of the private-profit system produced on the Left a wide and acrid disagreement over precisely what was to be done, all the remedies—save the anarchist remedy which found customers only in the literary world—shared in one element: the conviction that some form of general governmental control would be

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necessary to abate the evil and provide a sounder motive for economic activity, even if human nature itself had to be changed in the process.

Looking back today, it is possible to discern another element, less objective perhaps but extremely significant, that contributed to the general distrust of profit-motivated private enterprise. This was the pervasive fear that there would be no adequate place for young people of independence and intellectual courage in the profit-motivated world, and that we could expect to find roles suited to our talent and vision only if some major change occurred, affecting the entire process. Sometimes we masked this fear of exclusion by nurturing the belief that we would each be presented with an opportunity to "sell out," an offer which we would all summarily reject.

Many of us, of course, discovered when the awesome moment came at which we had to earn a living that it was not so easy to turn a moral lapse into cash—that even if we were willing to sell, there was a dearth of customers willing to buy. And when we did succeed in making the sale, it became evident that the customer was buying, not our moral fall, but our intellect and talent; ultimately many of us sold out to the challenge of the obstacles rather than the attraction of the rewards. In this respect, at least, we found the moral issues of private profit much more complex than they had looked from the outside.

Though this by itself did not wholly disprove our original notion that private enterprise was a tangle of inefficiency, greed, and double-dealing, we made a much more important discovery simultaneously which further undermined our general point of view: we discovered *government*. If private enterprise turned out to be less impotent than we had imagined, and perhaps less evil as well, it could be said with even greater certainty that government was not nearly so promising or so benevolent as we had correlatively imagined. Once we had discovered that "bureaucracy" was not merely a fiction dear to Capt. Patterson's *Daily News* and the Liberty League, but a frequently troublesome reality here and an iron tyranny in the socialist countries, it became much harder to believe that replacing the profit motive by government control would issue in the millennium. At the same time, at the top of the Eisenhower boom, when enlightened postwar capitalism and mutual funds worked hand in hand, it became considerably harder to attack private enterprise for inefficiency than it had been in the Depression.

Conversely, however, it became harder to continue believing in the virtues of private capitalism as in the next few years actual unemployment refused to disappear, as the facts on the economic plight of blacks and other minority groups emerged, as the salad-oil scandal broke and the stock market caved in, as the housing industry proved itself unable to provide a product which, even with subsidies, a majority of the American public could afford to buy or even to use.

The reappearance of economic problems which so many of us assumed had been solved might have seemed to justify the original suspicion of the profit motive shared by everyone on the Left during the 1930's. But closer inspection revealed that the old suspicions had not correctly identified the shortcomings of the system of production for private profit. To cite only two examples: where we thought that private industry alone, and not the government, would refuse to undertake any activity that was not economically profitable, we now began to find that government too was hampered by the inability to cover the cost of its programs or to win local acquiescence in federal plans; and where we were afraid that the workers would be unable to buy back the products they manufactured, we began to discover instead that the workers were as a class acquiring great purchasing power while below them there was growing up a new dependent class of people who, with tremendous needs to satisfy, were unable to work at all.

IN FACT, the difficulties facing the system of production and distribution in the United States are so massive today—particularly when measured against the promises that have been made to all sections of American society—that some on the Left have given up all serious hope of developing any viable set of economic arrangements and are instead stressing the values of non-work, community, and natural freedom. Such leftists—if leftists is what they really are—can of course give us no help in dealing with our economic problems. But what of the original leftist doctrine of the 1930's? I believe I am not alone in thinking that some of it might still be helpful in coping with the economic problems of today.

In particular some of us have begun to wonder if our negative postwar judgment of government action was not somewhat over-hasty. The criticism which we had to make of government some years ago—that it was fumbling and hesitant, impolite and ineffectively manned, that, in short, it repeated in a larger and somewhat more impacted way many of the mistakes of private industry—is not the criticism we hear nowadays from others. Today the complaint generally is that government is ruthless, insensitive, elitist, professional, and untrustworthy. There are, of course, those who will consider these adjectives damning, but they are also the adjectives which one applies almost as words of welcome to people who arrive on the scene determined to accomplish something. Those of us today who feel a desperate need to accomplish something in the economic sphere might well remember the position we held earlier and be prepared to make peace with the aggressive characteristics now so often decried in gov-

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ernment by many who claim no longer to believe in it.

It is also worth noticing that, with the exception of some who vaguely cry "Power to the People," the criticisms of government stop short of the allegation that, by its very nature, it is illegitimate. There are, indeed, widespread differences on what the character of government should be, how decentralized its operations, how significant its guarantees of free thought and free speech, how it can exact a necessary degree of conformity (and no more) from its citizens, how its leadership shall be selected—the list is endless. But with all the dissatisfaction with the operation of this particular system of government at this particular time, the challenge to the notion of government itself remains notably muted. The process of government retains a legitimacy which, for better or worse, the system of private enterprise seems at least for the moment to have lost.

This is not an insignificant inheritance. The economic task that lies ahead—the adjustment of resources and production to a Malthusian situation in which appetite grows by what it feeds on and faster than what it feeds on—will lay a heavy hold on us; indeed it already does. The assumption of general affluence wanes in the face of an overwhelming need for services and goods, and before the sense of diminishing natural assets. The system that worked quite well in postwar America—a system based on a continuing inflationary expansion of incomes, and on the painless taxing away of part of the increase for the benefit, among others, of those whose earning power was low—seems to be reaching a limit, and will not remain painless and probably will not work at all when real income stops rising. Whoever imposes a new pattern of distribution, a new set of limits, for perhaps the first time, on earnings and consumption and a new system of controls on product design and raw-material depletion, will not be likely to win the favor of multitudes. Yet this, at a bare minimum, is what must be done to manage what its boosters blandly describe as a reordering of *national* (which must mean also super-national) priorities. The private-for-profit mode of ownership cannot impose such a regimen; nor will it be produced by local communes, dancing to their own guitars. Only government can do the job. The Left agreed on this proposition back in the 1930's; it retains—for reasons unforeseen at the time—a large measure of validity today.

IV

Of the four beliefs I have ascribed to the Left of the 1930's, none, at first glance, seems so totally abandoned as the third—the idea that labor unions possess a special social value.

Of course the Left's commitment to labor in *theory* (practice remained quite another matter) antedated the 1930's, but for those of us who reached political consciousness during the Depression, the camera caught the immediacy of combat long before television did the same thing in the area of civil rights and with similar results. I remember a large photograph that *Life* published in the 1930's showing Richard Frankensteen and two or three other UAW organizers—one of them, as I recall, a Negro—blood streaming from their scalps, as they were repulsed from the Ford plant at River Rouge by Harry Bennett's "goon squad." Even those factions who regarded trade unionism as a fatal compromise between a potentially revolutionary force and the capitalist system saw in the picture of the bloodied organizers a demonstration of reality that surpassed words. The treatment of the sit-ins in the South in the early 1960's has forever fixed in the minds of today's Left the question: How can anyone say that decent men should never break the law as a matter of principle? So, in the same way, the battle of the unions to organize and to achieve bargaining parity in the 1930's imprinted on the minds of the leftists of that period the belief that something of permanent value resides in the principle and practice of trade unionism.

What has happened to this feeling?

Unquestionably, for many who were on the Left in the 1930's, it has disappeared in the overwhelming success that the unions have enjoyed—in the amazing fulfillment of the promise of the labor movement to effect a massive shift in class purchasing power in America. But the idea of union virtue also went down in pension- and welfare-fund scandals and reports of extortion and gangsterism; virtue rode off and disappeared from view in the Lincoln Continentals of the business agents; it drowned in a sea of work rules, featherbedding, overstaffing, and jurisdictional hassles; it was buried in the vast fortunes made by some of the idealistic young men who decided in the 1930's to devote themselves to labor law, having no idea that it would be lucrative but thinking, as do their current counterparts in OEO Legal Services, that they were giving up financial success in the pursuit of public service.

But the accusation against unions that carries the greatest weight today is that they deliberately exclude blacks and other non-white minorities, so that these institutions, once responsible for a vast broadening of the economic base of the nation, have become instead a reactionary force *preventing* the further broadening of that base. In summary, I think it not unfair to say that at the present moment many people who consider themselves to be Left in the contemporary context are either passively or actively anti-union. Indeed, some of their policy recommendations and strategies—community control of the schools, for example—include as a major objective the weakening and even the breaking of union power.

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Quite apart from the question of whether an anti-union position can legitimately be labeled as Left, I cannot accept the idea that the unions no longer serve as a vital instrument for the achievement of social justice. First of all, there is the fact that the labor movement as a whole has made effective a large transfer of purchasing power, and that this process of transfer continues up through the present. New unions are emerging in the service fields, drawing almost their entire membership from non-white minority groups. I refer particularly to the hospital and retail-drug unions, and to the municipal-service unions which have organized sectors of the working class which had never before been organized. Other unions, originally consisting of a largely white ethnic membership, are now filling their ranks with non-white industrial newcomers. The Transit Workers' Union, once almost completely Irish, has now become significantly black and Puerto Rican; the ILGWU, once almost completely Jewish, is now also largely black and Puerto Rican; and the United Federation of Teachers in New York has just absorbed thousands of non-white paraprofessionals who are beginning to benefit from the hard bargaining concluded earlier on behalf of the teachers themselves.

Another example of the same kind of thing can be found in the activities of the Joint Apprenticeship Program of the A. Philip Randolph Institute and the Workers' Defense League. Here, a special training program, based on an intimate understanding of union work rules and union strategic objectives, is helping to move a significant number of minority-group workers into sections of the building-trade unions which once systematically excluded blacks. The Workers' Defense League, collaborating with Mount Sinai Hospital, has also developed another union-backed program for training young workers in special building maintenance skills, ranging from simple plastering to sophisticated oil-burner servicing. Here a whole new industry opens up which is directed precisely at one of the crucial economic targets of the 1970's—reducing housing maintenance costs in the old cities.

A second continuing significance of the unions lies in their activities on behalf of major economic policy decisions by the national government. The primary objective of the labor movement as a whole—even to say so is supererogatory—is to insure work for its members at the highest possible wage. Unquestionably, the narrowness of this objective has led the unions to support national policies which provide full employment, to put the best possible face on it, at the expense of other values. They have indeed made peace with the government when the government has made war elsewhere. But the very narrowness of the objective is also a source of significant and important pressure in the direction of the materialist goal of the Old Left, the spreading of work throughout the economy. While local unions have tended to keep newcomers out until the older membership was fully employed, the national leadership, looking beyond these immediate concerns, has supported government programs which, through housing, school, and highway construction, through income-support programs and emphasis on social security and unemployment insurance, have tended to accelerate the inclusion of new groups into the working ranks of an industrial society.

Of particular importance just now, at this particular moment, is the fact that the unions, by and large, inevitably stand for the economic needs of the present population. They are not likely to permit the production and distribution of goods and services which are needed now to be set aside without a struggle by those who believe that technology and industrial development are essentially incompatible with the protection of the environment. The unions will not necessarily be right in every argument with the environmentalists over the competing values of production and employment on the one side, and natural preservation on the other. But this is an issue which requires the confrontation of strong opponents if decisions are to be based on a proper balance of the values in question. One might even argue that the unions have been too slow to recognize the potential threat to employment and broadened purchasing power that has been posed by the environmental movement. Most probably, the national unions will get involved in this question only when unemployment begins to rise significantly as the environmentalists become more successful in effecting cutbacks in economic development. The voice of the labor movement then will be raised in the land and it will, in all probability, be the only voice speaking for the interests of the masses of people now living who will be asked to sacrifice the most for the sake, presumably, of those yet unborn.

The point about the unions which some of us are beginning to see is that they function best when they are embattled. Unions function best when they are competing among themselves for new members, precisely as they function best when their members are under some economic pressure, just as they function best when their adversaries feel the same threat at their own backs. Unions function worst when their members have spare jobs up their sleeves and can take endless strikes, or nearly endless strikes, without suffering excessive economic hardship. And they function worst when their adversaries are stupid, poorly led, inexperienced, or timid.

Two of the great discoveries made by some of us over the past forty years were, first, that we could cross certain picket lines with no twinge of guilt, that the mere fact that a union was engaged

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on one side of a conflict did not automatically put that side in the right; and, second, that it was not really true that wage increases and more expensive work rules simply reduced someone's swollen profits. Nevertheless it remains the case that without a strong and vital labor movement the tradiional objectives of the Left are simply impossible of achievement.

V

Of the fourth tenet of the 1930's Left—the belief that racial problems in an industrial world are, at bottom, economic problems and that if economic problems are solved racial problems will also disappear—it is possible to say that virtually no leftist disagreed with it then and virtually no leftist agrees with it now.

Speaking, and very briefly, for myself (and perhaps for others with similar experience) I thought I knew something thirty-five years ago about what Americans had done to the Negro and the Indian; yet it has only been in the last few years that I have begun to become aware of the thickness of the accumulated humiliations, the depth of despair, and the sheer scope and variety of the problems imposed on people of color throughout the United States. I do not say this with any great sense of personal shame, or in order to brag of a miraculous recovery from the depths of sin. It is simply that I had not understood fully what was going on, although I had read about the racial problem endlessly, participated organizationally more than most, had friends in the black community, and took some small part in their political affairs. Today, in the light of what I have learned about the pervasive influence of color in the destiny of the non-white American, I can no longer believe, any more than most leftists, whether Old or New, that racial problems are entirely caused by economic factors or are entirely reducible to them.

Thus I now recognize the need, and I now support as just, the claim for vast remedial work with those who bear the scars of discrimination, broken family life, poverty, undernourishment, squashed ego, and all the other torments that racism has visited on blacks. (Many non-blacks require and have required the same kind of remedial work for the disabilities caused by discrimination based on class.) I cannot, however, accept the idea which has overtaken large segments of the contemporary Left that black performance in school or on a job should be judged by a special set of standards. To me this seems not only unnecessary but patronizing and demeaning to blacks. More than that, it is a denial of the belief in human equality—the one belief which more than any other has always distinguished the Left from the Right and loyalty to which sometimes seems as rare today on the so-called Left as it has traditionally been on the Right.

VI

As I reach the end of this examination of the four tenets which were universally held on the Left in the 1930's, I am struck by several impressions. The first is the seriousness of the present economic and political situation facing the United States, a situation in which wages and income are out of phase with productivity, and a whole roster of problems and conflicts has arisen to make more difficult the political steps necessary to bring these economic facts back into an acceptable relation with each other. Measured by the problems of this period in American history, the political discourse in which most of us are generally engaged seems unrelievedly trivial.

Secondly, I am astonished at how many of the central ideas of the Left of the 1930's continue to enjoy a considerable measure of validity.

And finally, I suspect that the very friend who stimulated this enterprise by accusing me of having moved to the Right will nevertheless continue unconvinced, feeling that I have omitted what must seem to him the most significant element in my present stance: weariness. I, on the other hand, would argue that what he senses is simply the fact that I am no longer a practicing enthusiast. For this, I make no apology. I am now an enthusiast-in-waiting, knowing all too well that no program for social amelioration or greater justice ever works out exactly as one would wish, and that frequently it merely trades a newer, unworn evil for a familiar one which already fits loosely, and perhaps more comfortably. It may be that the greatest gift that the Left of the 1930's can offer its contemporary successors may be the ability to expect the unexpected disappointment, and yet to persevere in the pursuit of a more equitable pattern of the production and distribution of goods, services, and political power, even when the facile answer no longer seduces, and when the tedious job of weighing, analyzing, and measuring the particular policy and the concrete proposal becomes—as it eventually must—the overriding order of the day.

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Crusade

Amos Oz

AMOS OZ, *at the age of thirty-one, has achieved a commanding position among new Israeli novelists. A member of Kibbutz Huldah since 1957, he is the author of a volume of short stories,* Jackal Country *(1965), and two novels,* Somewhere Else *(1966) and* My Michael *(1968). This last work, a spectacular best-seller when it appeared in Israel, will soon be issued in English by Knopf. In the past year-and-a-half, Oz has also published two novellas, of which "Crusade" is the earlier.*

Although "Crusade" is Oz's first experiment with historical fiction, it resembles his treatment of contemporary materials in its brooding concern with the gap between instinctual urge and civilized self, its interest in man's impulse to be more—or less—than man. (See Robert Alter's comments on Oz in "New Israeli Fiction," COMMENTARY, June 1969.) In "Crusade," where the Jew plays the role of the Mysterious Other (a role played by the Arab in some of Oz's stories with a contemporary setting), Oz seems to suggest that the roots of the hatred of Christian for Jew lie in the general human reluctance to accept the limits of the human condition. The translation was prepared by Nicholas De Lange.

I

IT ALL began with outbreaks of discontent in the villages.

Day by day bad omens began to appear in the poorer areas. An old farmer of Galenne saw the form of a fiery chariot in the sky. In Sareaux an ignorant old woman croaked out oracles couched in the purest Latin. Rumors went around of a cross in an out-of-the-way church which burned for three days with a green flame and was not consumed. Our Lady appeared to a blind peasant beside a fountain one night, and when the priests fed him wine he described the vision in scriptural language.

The faithful seemed to detect a kind of malicious joy fermenting throughout the winter in the dwellings of the accursed Jews.

Strange things happened. Bands of dark wanderers, huge and black as bears, appeared simultaneously in several places. Even educated folk could sense at times a murmur gnawing inside them. There was no peace to be had.

In Clermont, in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1095, Pope Urban II summoned the flocks of God to an expedition to liberate the Holy Land from the hands of the infidel, and to expiate their sins through the hardships of the journey—for spiritual joy is achieved through suffering.

Early in the autumn of the following year, four days after the end of the grape harvest, the noble Count Guillaume of Touron set out at the head of a small troop of peasants, serfs, and outlaws from his estate near Avignon and headed toward the Holy Land, to take part in its deliverance and so to find peace of mind.

Besides the blight which had afflicted the vines and the shriveling of the grapes, and besides gigantic debts, there were other, more immediate reasons which moved the noble Count to set out on his journey. We are informed of these in the chronicle of an extraordinary young man who himself took part in the expedition, Claude, nicknamed "Crookback." He was a distant relative of the Count and had grown up on his estate.

This Claude was perhaps the adoptive heir of the childless Count, perhaps a mere hanger-on. He was literate and almost cultivated, though prone to alternating violently between fits of depression and enthusiasm. He would give himself over by turns, restlessly and without any real satisfaction, to ascetic practices and to the delights of the flesh. He was a great believer in the power of the supernatural: he kept company with half-wits, fancying he found in them a holy spark, and much-thumbed books and peasant women alike fired him with a wild desire. His excesses of religious fervor and gloomy melancholy inspired feelings of contempt and loathing in others and consumed his very flesh from off his bones, kindling an evil flame in his eye.

As for the Count, the Count treated Claude Crookback with sullen toleration and ill-suppressed rudeness. Some uncertainty, in fact, prevailed at court about the status and privileges

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of this young but silver-haired fellow who had, apart from everything else, a violent and ridiculous love of cats and who was a passionate collector of women's jewelry.

CLAUDE mentions in his chronicle, among the factors which prompted the Count to set out on his journey, certain events which occurred in swift succession in the course of the preceding year.

"At the beginning of the autumn," he writes, "in the year of Our Lord's Incarnation 1096, the sin of arrogance raised its head among the peasantry. There occurred on our estate several cases of insolence and insubordination, such as the destruction of part of the meager crop, motivated by anger at its very meagerness; daggers were stolen, the river flooded, barns were fired, falling stars were seen, sorcery was practiced, and mischievous pranks were played. All this within the confines of our domains, apart from numerous crimes in the neighboring districts and even across the river. Indeed, it was found necessary to oil the torture-wheel once again, and to put to the test several rebellious serfs, so as to quell the rising fever of violence, for suffering begets love. On our estate seven peasants and four witches were put to death. In the course of their torture their crimes came to light, and light purges all sin.

"In addition during the autumn our young mistress Louise of Beaumont showed the first signs of falling sickness, the very disease which had carried off her predecessor, two years earlier.

"On Easter Day the Count carried his drinking beyond all reasonable limits, and on this occasion he did not succeed in soaring above the state of tipsy rage to the heights of drunken joy. There occurred episodes," continues the chronicler in a rather veiled tone, "such as what happened that night, when the Count smashed six valuable drinking-vessels, family heirlooms; he hurled these gorgeous objects at the serving-men in reprisal for some fault whose nature was not clear. Injuries were done; blood was spilled. The Count made reparation for his error with constant silent prayers and fasting, but the fragments of the shattered goblets could not be pieced together—I have them all in my keeping still. What is done is done, and there is no going back."

Claude also writes as follows:

"In the early days of the summer, in the course of the barley harvest, the Jewish agent fell under suspicion. He was put to death in consequence of his fervent protestations of innocence. The spectacle of the burning of the Jew might have served to dispel somewhat the anxiety and depression which had caught hold of us since the autumn, but it so happened that the Jew, as he was being burned, succeeded in upsetting everything by *pronouncing* a violent Jewish curse on Count Guillaume from the pyre. This terrible event occurred in the presence of the whole household, from the ailing lady down to the most ignorant servant girls. Obviously it was impossible to punish the wretch for his curses: It is in the nature of these Jews only to burn once.

"In the course of the summer our lady's condition grew worse and her life was in danger. Without grace even love is of no avail. It was a pitiful spectacle. So grievous were her agonies, so loud her screams in the night, that the Count was finally compelled to shut up in the tower the most delicate of the flowers of his garden. Therefore was the Son of God meek and mild when He bore our sufferings upon Himself, that we might know and remember that the finest harvest of all is when the hardest blade cleaves the softest earth in God's world and this was a sign for us. By night, by day and by night, the Count gave orders for vigils of prayer at the cell of our ailing lady.

"Our lady was young in years and her pale face seemed ever filled with wonder. Her limbs were delicate and she seemed completely transparent, as if made of spirit, not of base matter. She floated away downstream from us before our very eyes. Sometimes we could hear her voice raised in song; sometimes we secretly gathered up her tear-soaked handkerchief, and in the small hours of the morning we heard her cry out to the Blessed Virgin. Then her silence would rend the air. These days saw a severe deterioration in the affairs of the estate. The creditors were arming themselves, and even the peasantry nursed a muttering rebelliousness.

"All speech was hushed in our halls. So frail and white-faced did our lady appear that kneeling at the foot of the cross, she seemed to us like Our Lady Herself. She was flickering and dying away. Meanwhile the Count withdrew into silence, and merely kept on buying more and more fine horses—far in excess of the needs of the fields and vineyards. He paid for them with parcels of woodland and orchards, since the money he had was being steadily eaten up.

"Early one morning our lady suddenly heard the gentle sound of the bells of the village church. She put her golden head out through the lattice, and when the sun rose she was found gathered into the bosom of the Saviour. Her sandals are still kept in the chest in our hall, together with two tiny bracelets and a green cross of pearls which she wore round her neck, exceedingly fair."

THE chronicle of this relative of the Count also contains some turbid musings, fraught with confusions, written in troubled and disconnected Latin. Some of them may be quoted here:

"There is a secret sign-language which weaves a net between inanimate objects. Not a leaf falls to the ground without the action of some design. A man of the brooding type, such as my noble lord Guillaume de Touron, if he is but cut off for

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a while from the sphere of action, is immediately liable to come under the influence of the supernatural. If he is not found worthy of grace, it enters into his vitals like a gnawing poison, unseen, unfelt but lethal. Like the anguish of vast plains scorched by the noonday sun, without a single man to cast a shadow. Scents borne on the breeze. Woods, restful yet menacing. Perhaps the allure of the ocean. Or the tender, bitter silence of distant mountains. So a man of the finer breed, in the middle of his life, toward evening, as the wind drops, may suddenly pause and shrink back, shrink back listening with all his might, and as he listens he gnaws incessantly at his soul. For all these reasons, then, and for others which cannot be put into words, Guillaume de Touron set out for the Holy Land, bent on taking part in its deliverance and thereby also on finding inner peace."

II

SLUMPED in his saddle like a weary hunter, his features hewn of granite, his skull big and broad, the Count led his company up through the Rhone lands toward the town of St.-Étienne. There, at St.-Étienne, he meant to break the journey and stay for a day or two. Claude Crookback supposes that he wanted to spend some time at the Cathedral in solitary prayer, to ask the bishop's blessing for the expedition and to buy fodder and arms. Perhaps he also intended to take on a few knights as mercenaries. The roads are fraught with danger outside the city walls; the sword must hew out a path for the forces of grace.

The Count rode his mare Mistral. His pace was still leisurely. This was not due to hesitancy, nor to that calm which follows the moment of self-dedication; there was simply a gradual gathering of momentum. The mare Mistral was a massive, broad-built creature, just like her master. At first sight she seemed like a work-horse. She could never be roused to the point of anger, thanks to a kind of feigned modesty which extended over all her movements, like a sort of inner deliberation—placid, ruminative, almost sanctimonious. But at a second, more penetrating glance—when one noticed, for instance, her capricious manner while being harnessed or unharnessed—one could see quite clearly that just as it was impossible to arouse her, so it was completely and utterly impossible to enforce total submission on this mare Mistral.

AND everywhere could be felt the creeping, fawning intensification of the forces of autumn on the plains and in the hills. The odors of the vintage everywhere accompanied the expedition on its way. It was like a constant melody, soft yet at the same time penetrating and persistent.

The signs of the drought and the blight on the vines were everywhere plain to see. The faces of the peasants bore expressions of muted, ill-suppressed malice.

Even in times of plenty these districts ever gaze up to the gray sky with a tight-lipped look: mud-spattered peasants, rotting roofs of thatch, clumsy crosses like the very faith of the region—blunt and strong, row upon row of black haystacks, and at dawn and at dusk there comes rolling from afar the sound of rustic bells, calling to the Saviour out of the depths.

At these twilight hours one could also make out the taut lines of powerful birds in flight—and the sudden screeching of these birds. In everything could be seen the mounting evidence of a heavy, thick reality—or, at a second glance, the slight impulse of some abstract purpose.

Everything, even the silent, baffled docility of the plump peasant girls who paused to gaze from a safe distance at the company of men on horseback—everything was somehow open to several interpretations.

Had Guillaume de Touron considered the possible interpretations? If so, he did not show it on the surface. His few, brief words of command bore witness to an inner remoteness. It was as if he were sunk deep in a problem of logic or preoccupied in the checking of books which would not balance. Our chronicler, Claude, who frequently noticed his lord's silences, was sometimes inclined to attribute to him abstract speculations or spiritual exercises. In short, it was sometimes felt that the Count omitted to answer questions, or answered without being asked. "Come here!" he would say, or "Leave it!" "Now!" "Fetch it!" "Forward!"

Those who heard these orders might easily have imagined they were uttered by someone who was about to fall asleep, or who was struggling to rouse himself from a deep slumber.

Nevertheless, the man surrounded himself with a cool ring of lordliness, which needed neither effort nor stress; a strong, inborn quality, compelling fear and silence even while he slept, a crouching wolf.

AN inborn quality. In Claude's chronicle one can read a short description of the appearance and bearing of the Count at the start of the expedition, and also a comparison which—after the manner of the chronicler—is rather fulsome:

"Truth to tell, the bearing of Count Guillaume de Touron was not only extremely natural and composed, but entirely free from doubts and excitements. It was like a gentle stream, which wends its way calmly among the meadows of a plain. Placid and leisurely it flows, never tearing at its banks or throwing up waves or spray, but everything which falls into the current is swept constantly on by a force which is neither friendly nor yet timid—a peaceful, inexorable stream."

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III

At dusk on the third day of their journey the band of believers reached the gates of St.-Étienne. They handed over their weapons to the officer of the gate, they paid all the dues, sacred and secular, they submitted to a personal inspection at the hands of the guards, lest there should be found among them an invalid or a Jew, and finally the Count and his men were permitted to enter the city. The ignorant folk stroked and chewed their beards at the sight of such plenty of women, priests, traders, and merchandise.

In the square behind the Hospice of the Sacred Heart, Guillaume de Touron reviewed his men. He gave orders for the horses to be well fed, set guards over the baggage and animals, distributed two pieces of silver per head, and gave the men leave to disperse around the town until daybreak the next day, "so that they might satisfy their needs with women and drink, and also purify their souls with prayer."

The Count himself, after a slight hesitation, chose in the first place to make his way to the Cathedral. Above all he sought peace of mind. As often happens to men who are looking for something the nature of which is unknown to them, he felt a kind of vague physical unrest, as if his body were rebelling against his soul and defiling it with evil vapors. His body was tough, massive, and compact, his head held slightly forward, as if the weight of the world hung more heavily upon him than upon the mass of ordinary believers.

On his way to the Cathedral there passed through his mind the forms of the death of his two wives, the second and also the first. He contemplated the forms which death had taken like a man looking at the shapes of icicles in the winter. He felt no sorrow for these women, the second or the first, because neither had presented him with a son and heir. But he saw quite vividly that their death was the beginning of his own death. He visualized his death as a far-off place to which one must go, climbing perhaps or breaking through by force, and he joined together with a blind and stubborn bond the words "to redeem," "to be redeemed," "to set fire," "to go up in flames." Summer by summer, almost day by day, he felt his blood running colder. He did not know the reason, but he silently yearned for simple elements—light, warmth, sands, fire, wind.

Meanwhile Claude Crookback went down to a house of ill-repute on the edge of the town. He found a woman of easy virtue, dressed her up in his clothes and put his cloak around her, and handed her his knife. Then he stretched out on the ground for her to trample on him and begged to be tortured. While writhing with her, drenched with sweat, Claude screamed and laughed, cried and talked continuously. In the confused account which he composed that same night in his cell in the Hospice of the Sacred Heart he does not wallow in the details of his sin but limits himself to an enthusiastic description of the eternal power of grace. Does not the sun deign to be reflected even in pools of mire without withdrawing its reflection?

The worthy bishop of St.-Étienne, a small, rotund, simple man, was sitting motionless in his study, contemplating his hands stretched out before him on the table, or perhaps contemplating the table itself, and cautiously digesting his dinner. Guillaume de Touron's expression as he suddenly entered the study, half-blocking the doorway with his bulk, was—as the bishop himself later described it in his diary—"clouded in a manner which implied either abstraction or concentration, two states of mind which are far harder to distinguish by their outward indications than is commonly supposed."

After Mass the bishop and his guest sat down to a meal. They permitted each other a small drink, after which they closeted themselves together in the library. The light of ten great candles in copper candlesticks wove intricate patterns on their faces, on the curved outlines of the objects in the room. It exaggerated every movement and translated it into a language of gloomy shadows. Here the bishop and his guest conducted a brief conversation which touched on the subjects of the quality of humility, the City of God, horses and hunting dogs, the hardships of the journey and its chances of success, the Jews, the price of woodland, and the varieties of signs and wonders.

The knight soon fell silent and let the bishop of St.-Étienne talk on alone. The bishop, as we read in the studied Latin of his diary, "was delighted by the intelligent and thoroughly polite, yet extraordinarily restrained attentiveness" of his guest.

Finally, well after midnight, by the failing light of the candles, Count Guillaume de Touron requested and received from the bishop of St.-Étienne a general and absolute remission of sins. The bishop also bestowed on his guest some useful information on the state of the roads, the subtlety of the Devil and the stratagems by which he can be circumvented, the sources of the sacred river Jordan and the Sea of Galilee, the gold of the Jews, the abominable acts of the Greeks and the means of preserving oneself from them. It was an hour of shadowy silence. Out of the depths of the silence came a slight rustling, as if there were someone else in the Cathedral, nursing a different intention.

The guest entrusted to the servant of God a donation for the use of the church. Then he took his leave. He walked out into the warm darkness, into the realm of the night.

Before retiring to his chaste bed, the bishop made a point of adding a few lines to his diary, which took the form of a rather remarkable

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observation, even allowing for the late hour.

"I am prepared to swear on oath now," writes the pious cleric, "that the man did not utter more than a hundred words in the course of the four hours which he spent with me in this holy place. It is amazing, almost uncanny, that we did not remark this extreme silence until after the man had taken his leave and departed. His silence succeeded in disguising itself completely. This is the first time since we entered on our vocation," the bishop writes in astonishment, "that we have granted remission of sins to a believer and even blessed his journey without his having felt himself obliged to confess to us even one slight sin of the many sins of which this world is so regrettably full. Worse still, the very strange and suspicious secretiveness with which Count Guillaume de Touron treated us remained concealed from us until after the man had left our presence. Naturally we could not chase after him and bring him back out of the darkness. We are obliged, then, even *post eventum*, to exercise to the full the faculty of strict justice, and to conclude here that it is likely that we have for once been deceived in a sly, calculating, distinctly un-Christian way.

"On the other hand, we are equally obliged to exercise the quality of mercy, and to record herein that his silence, in common with certain other signs of suffering which we fancied we observed on the countenance of Guillaume de Touron, may be interpreted as indications of humility and of spiritual suffering. And are not these two, humility and suffering, outstanding Christian virtues? May God have mercy upon us."

IV

THE expedition set out from St.-Étienne and turned eastward toward Grenoble. It crossed the river and streamed through dense autumnal forests. For the autumn was cautiously gathering strength, as though first testing the powers of resistance of the river, of the hills, and of the forest before falling on them.

At the outskirts of the villages stood rugged, bowed peasants, gazing motionless from afar at the passing procession. The Jews, as though forewarned, abandoned their hovels and disappeared into the undergrowth before the approach of the expedition. Out of the darkness of the woods they seemed to be rousing the forces of evil against us by muttering spells and incantations.

How unaware we are, mere creatures of flesh and humors and blood, of the unseen, powerful web of God's actions around us!

Guillaume de Touron knew this, and so he told Claude in camp one night: Sometimes the curse of God comes like the caress of a woman's hand, and sometimes His blessing comes like a knife in the flesh. The appearance of a thing or its effect is not its essence. Take the curse and the wrath which God unleashed against the Jews. See how God's curse has refined this tribe. These people are fine and subtle; even our own language when it comes from their mouths is somehow suddenly turned to wine.

The thought of the Jews excited an inner panting in Count Guillaume de Touron—a strong, dark purpose, gloomy and filled with cold joy.

Claude Crookback, for his part, was idly musing about the wives of these Jews—warm, moist, brown velvet bitches.

The Jews, thought Guillaume de Touron, are stealthily nibbling away at us, like water eating away iron. This is the soothing touch, which melts unseen. Even the sword—our sword—passes through them as through a mass of turbid water which will slowly consume it. Gracious Lord, have pity on Thy flock, for the forces of defilement rage enflamed all around us, and temptation encircles us, trying to break in. And the faith in our hearts is upright and cold, barren and very sad. Is it possible perhaps that a Jew has insinuated himself into our ranks by stealth?

Guillaume de Touron was suddenly overpowered by this suspicion, and he found himself waking out of his slumber. A warm thaw started to move inside him, and made him feel better. Perhaps he had been granted a sign or a hint. In his heart he seemed to say "here," "there," "now."

THE appearance of the expedition was distorted when reflected upside down in the streams, or when seen from afar. Water and distance had the quality of turning any movement to utter mockery.

Along the lines of hills whose green grew ever darker appeared first of all three knights on horseback, wrapped in white cloaks. A rough black cross was embroidered on their cloaks in front and behind, as if they had been run through with swords and the wounds had long since turned black. They rode on tall, brown horses. From a distance it seemed as if the hooves of the horses hardly touched the ground.

Behind them rode the Count, surrounded by his retinue, mounted and clad in helmets and coats of mail. The Count himself was dressed in hunting-gear and leaned in the saddle on his mare Mistral as though he found it exhausting to ride. Was he, as Claude says, already somewhat ill at this stage of the expedition? The question is a foolish one. Almost everyone knows that illness is a configuration of inner possibilities too numerous to count.

Claude, by contrast, was easily recognizable, both by his deformity and by his flashy yellow shield, glinting like false gold.

Behind the Count's retinue hurried some three-dozen men on foot. In the rear guard trudged mules laden with provisions, wagons rolling on wooden wheels, slaves and camp-followers,

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a few women who had attached themselves to the expedition, two cows plundered from farmers along the way, some goats, and at the tail end of the procession and on both its flanks dozens of dogs, skinny, misshapen, malicious mongrels, aimlessly darting hither and thither.

The motley cavalcade flowed past mournful autumn fields as if irresistibly drawn by some invisible lodestone.

The autumn was folding everything into the embrace of a thick mist. The gathering dampness spread over everything. It seemed as though the autumn were being malevolently formed according to a careful plan: a damp, dark condensation in the woods; a gray vapor in the valleys; a tense calm projecting quivering forms on the horizon. And still the rains held back.

The days, the nights, the hours of twilight in between, were like a dream-journey in which the distance becomes a malleable substance, always prone to be distorted. Even the wild shouts of joy of the rough good-for-nothings around the campfire at night were immediately absorbed into the distance and reflected back purged by the alchemy of autumn and melancholy, far slower and deeper sounds than when they left the mouths of those base fellows.

Sometimes toward dawn, before the camp was woken out of its slumber by the clatter of iron pots, by the jangling of spurs and the neighing of horses, Claude would be flooded with piety and would rouse his lord for matins. Then, at the hour of prayer, the world would show itself and would overpower everything with its unbelievable peace. This was a gloomy peace, the sadness of barren hills which are no longer hills but the very soul of the hills, the earth arching up in longing to the clouds in a seductive gesture which no satisfaction will ever eradicate.

And in the depths of the silence, the body itself began suddenly to yearn for its own extinction. Fine vapor, it was felt, was the proper consistency. And the prayer struck home to the man at prayer.

V

A FEW times it happened that darkness fell while they were still in the depth of the forest. Then they would light a great fire in the middle and surround the camp with a close circle of small bonfires for fear of vampires, wolves, and demons.

If one looked upward one could see how the light of the fire was broken by the thick ceiling of leaves. Round about wolves howled, foxes' eyes glinted, an evil bird screeched and shrieked. Or was it the wind? Or sinister imitations of the sound of fox, bird, and wind? Even the rustling of fallen leaves hinted perpetually at the certainty of another, a hostile camp whispering round about, encircling. The forces of grace were being besieged.

The first signs of an approaching conflict were concrete enough. Dogs would go mad now and again and have to be put down with an arrow or a spear-thrust. A horse suddenly broke its halter in the night and galloped off into the wild darkness as if it had chosen to turn wolf. One of the whores who had attached themselves to the army burst into shrieks and did not stop screaming for two days and three nights, under the influence of some spell or incubus. In the end they were compelled to abandon her to the devil who had seized hold of her. One day the Christians came to a spring, and, being parched, they drank and let their horses and servants drink, not realizing that the water was tainted. The water inflicted humiliating agonies on man and beast alike. Surely a Jew had mingled with the Christians in disguise, was walking along the way with us, and cursing us.

Even the villagers received them grimly. The travelers were compelled to extract provisions, women, and drink from the stubborn peasants by force of arms. Once or twice stiff skirmishes broke out in the villages and Christian blood was spilled in vain. The parsimony of these districts was coarse and sullen. Even for an expedition of knights traveling in the name of Jesus Christ to deliver the Holy Land, the villagers would not open their fists without a stroke of the sword to extract charity by force from their clenched grasp.

And yet in several villages there were women who came of their own volition after dark and silently offered their bodies. These village women were huge and strong as horses. Their silence during the act, their stiff and solid submission, was open to several interpretations—pride or modesty, dullness or rebellion. Claude, assailed by glimmerings of fevered fanaticism, would try his strength by admonishing these peasant women. He would get up and stand in front of them and speak with ecstatic piety of the Kingdom of Heaven, the corrupt nature of the flesh, of the happiness in store for those who give all with a cheerful spirit, "for to him that giveth shall it be given, and compassion shall be shown to him that hath compassion on others."

Who can tell the number of those scattered villages on the fringes of the forest, in valleys without so much as a name, in great gorges swathed in mist, in the winding courses of forgotten brooks and streams? "It is God's will," writes Claude in his chronicle of the journey, "to scatter His flock to the ends of the earth so as to gather to His bosom once more on the day of judgment the few, the elect, the truly deserving."

AS FOR the Count, he drove his men just as he drove his mare Mistral. He did not give them his attention, yet his presence could not be forgotten for a moment. In his heart he was lonely. Remote from his fellow men. Remote from his surroundings, a stranger to the forest, ice-cold. And now,

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in its remoteness, this soul would converse with itself on the necessity of love. To love, to be loved, to belong, to be—Guillaume de Touron felt a wild desire to overpower or crush some obstacle whose nature was hidden from him until the day when he would be permitted to be born anew. His shattered thoughts played with various images of death, of alienation, breaking through. Like a drowning man struggling with his last reserves of strength to free himself from the grip of the water. But he did not know what the water was or how far the water stretched.

Outwardly he merely seemed silent and watchful. Straining his senses to the utmost, in the hope of hearing a voice. Afraid to open his mouth and speak, lest he should miss the voice: one cannot speak and listen at the same time. And yet Guillaume de Touron was endowed with a strange power over others. Despite his silence, he overran and choked everyone around him like a great creeper. Without intending to, he grasped and clung to everything, leaned on it with all his weight. It was a false impression that Count Guillaume de Touron, as often happens to men of his class, was a withdrawn and hesitant master, showing no reaction when his servants ran wild. A second glance would show that the reeds on which he leaned bent beneath him, while he, by the mere force of his character, twisted and crushed them unawares.

From time to time he would conjure up an image of Jerusalem, drawing ever closer, but he would dismiss these inner visions, for they did not satisfy him.

In camp, at prayer, as they drank from the cask or from mountain streams, Guillaume de Touron would cast a gloomy eye over each man in turn, trying to detect the hidden Jew.

By now his first suspicions had turned to utter certainty, as happens sometimes to a man who seems to hear in the distance a vague, menacing tune which makes him wonder whether or not it is really there. After a while, from the effort of listening, the tune begins to lead the listener astray, to come suddenly from inside him, from his very innards.

He surveyed his men, every single one of them, their expressions and gestures, eating, at play, in sleep, and on horseback. Is there any reason in looking for signs in the sensible sphere? And what is Jewish in a Jew?—surely not any outward shape or form but some abstract quality. The contrast does not lie even in the affections of the soul. Simply this: a terrible, a malignant presence. Is not this the essence of treachery: to penetrate, to be within, to interfuse, to put out roots and to flourish in what is most delicate. Like love, like carnal union. There is a Jew in our midst. Perhaps the Jew has divided himself up, and insinuated himself partly here, partly there, so that not a man of us has escaped contagion.

Once, when the army had halted toward evening beside a Roman ruin whose remains were being eaten away by decay and strong roots, the Count turned to Claude Crookback with a question: Is it not written in one of those books that a wolf can insinuate himself so successfully into a flock of sheep that even a hunter cannot recognize him?

Claude's reply, perhaps in a slightly improved version, appears in his chronicle:

"I replied to this question from my lord the Count by means of a simple parable or allegory, in the spirit of the ancient wisdom. The sweetest apple is always the first to turn rotten. A wolf in sheep's clothing would naturally exaggerate his disguise. This is a sign for us: Who was it who embraced our Saviour and kissed His cheek and reveled in honeyed words and signs of love, if not he who had sold Him for thirty pieces of silver, the traitor Judas Iscariot? The Devil is cunning, my lord, cunning and insidious, and we Christians are men of innocence. Without the grace of heaven we are trapped, every one of us, in the snare set at our feet."

VI

Among them there was a piper, Andrés Alvárez by name. He was devoted to the slaves and outcasts and harlots and believed in the power of his music to soften even the most unruly spirit. He even experimented with the horses and dogs. He had forsworn meat and wine, and wore a heavy stone on a chain around his neck to humble himself to the dust, for he thought of himself as "meek and lowly." Perhaps he was trying to purge his body of some sin he had committed or had intended to commit a long time before. He called himself "worthy of death," and wanted to be killed on the road to Jerusalem. Suspicion fell on this man. He was ordered to pass his hand through the fire so that it could be ascertained what he was. Because of his terror, and perhaps indeed out of joy at the purifying ordeal which lay ahead, he was seized with great excitement and was bathed in sweat. When he passed his hand through the fire, it was as wet as if it had been soaked in water, so that he was only slightly scorched and the verdicts were divided. But, seeing that this Andrés pleaded with the Count to have him put to death because he was tainted with impurity, they spared him and let him live so that he could be kept under further observation.

There were also three Celts who were half-brothers. They were the sons of one woman by three different fathers. These three displayed an unwholesome disposition to burst into horrifying laughter at things which were no laughing matter, such as a dead fox, the stump of an oak struck by lightning, or a sobbing woman. They

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were also in the habit of lighting a small fire of their own at night and huddling around it secretively, talking all the time in an unknown language, full of harsh consonants.

Every Sunday the three half-brothers would celebrate an esoteric rite. Piling up heaps of stones, they would wring the neck of a bird and pour out its blood into a fire which they had lit in the hollow of the stones. Perhaps they used to conjure up by this means the soul of their mother.

The Celtic brothers were also gifted with extraordinary powers of marksmanship, which did more than anything else to attract to them the icy glances of the Count. Expertly they would amuse themselves by firing an arrow into the air and piercing it with another in mid-flight. Several times they hurled a stone in the dark and brought down a night bird in pitch darkness, guided by the sound of its wing-beats alone.

One evening Claude Crookback was sent to tell them to moderate their laughter, as befits men on a holy mission, to stop talking among themselves in their pagan tongue, and to allow him to inspect their baggage. In addition, Claude resolved inwardly to find a suitable opportunity to examine each of them while they were passing water so as to make certain that none of them was circumcised.

Claude, it must be admitted, loved these errands, because he felt himself humiliated by them. For the humble shall be exalted and the lowly of spirit shall be raised up.

From Grenoble the expedition continued to move slowly eastward.

The Count chose to keep away from the main roads. He was attracted to forgotten regions. Sometimes he even decided to abandon the lanes and to cut across the heathland and forest. It was not the shortest route that he preferred, but the most forsaken. In practice, Guillaume de Touron set his course afresh every morning: he simply rode in the direction of the sunrise, and continued riding until the rays of the setting sun struck his helmet from behind. He put a simple explanation on the laws of nature: Whoever moves toward the light moves toward the Holy City. Insofar as it was granted to this weary soul to feel love, he loved Jerusalem. He firmly believed that in Jerusalem it is possible to die and be born again pure.

And so, while the autumn beat on their backs with fists soft as a caress, the travelers crossed the foothills of the mountains, felt their way through misty glens, and gradually advanced down the slopes toward the valley of the River Po. There was not a man among them who had ever seen the sea. Perhaps they imagined that the sea would appear to them as an exceedingly broad river, that if they strained their eyes they would see the opposite shore and discern the suggested outlines of towers, walls, lofty steeples, a high halo of light, a holy brightness hovering over the City of God on the other side.

Meanwhile, all along the way, they sustained themselves on what the villagers offered them at the sight of the sword. They made detours around the towns and the estates of noblemen, as if they were constantly avoiding an outstretched net.

Several times on the way they met other companies of knights also making their way to the Holy Land. The Count was not willing to join those who were greater than himself and would not condescend to annex to his band those who were smaller. As they had set out from their own land, so he wanted them to arrive at the Holy City: few but pure.

One day they were almost compelled to hew their way by force of arms. Near a small village by the name of Argentera, beside the well on the way into the village, Guillaume de Touron was surprised to come across a heavy force of crusaders, at least three times as large as his own band. These were Teutonic knights with a large crowd of followers, and at their head was a young knight, beautiful in appearance and haughty of mien, Albrecht of Brunswick by name.

This was a magnificent expedition: respectable matrons borne in litters curtained with silk, a company of elderly lords in costumes of scarlet, gold-buttoned, a company of young lords wearing long, pointed helmets tipped with a silver cross, attendants decked out in velvet liveries, banners and standards borne by scar-faced standard-bearers. There were also crowds of priests, jesters and easy women, beasts and animals. All this great abundance was carried in broad wagons the like of which has not been seen in our country. The sides of the wagons were painted all around with detailed scenes from the lives of our Lord and His Apostles, all of whom the artist had chosen to portray with stern expressions.

Albrecht of Brunswick deigned to dismount first and present himself to the lesser lord. He delivered himself of a long succession of greetings in florid Latin. He also uttered words of enticement. It was clear that he proposed to take this smaller party which had crossed his path under his wing. But when, after the formulas of greeting were finished, Guillaume de Touron maintained a frigid reserve, and refrained from fulfilling the obligations of Christian fellowship, even responding to the greetings as though they were also farewells, the German smiled a faint smile and gave orders to unseat the stranger from his horse and to annex his band by force.

Before he had finished issuing the order there was a clatter as every sword was drawn. Horses began to rear and neigh and their skins rippled like pools of water in a breeze. A great movement took hold of the men, and glittered on spears

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and helmets. Instantly the band raised their instruments and started to play with fierce joy. Wild yet spectacular was the sudden melee of horses, banners, and accoutrements, dust, shouts, and war-cries, as if a colorful dance had suddenly broken loose on those gloomy plains. Even the cries of the first casualties of battle resembled from a distance the clamor of reveling merry-makers. Everyone, even the dying men, clung faithfully to a certain style and would not depart from it by a hair's-breadth.

And so, quite soon, the knight from Brunswick said, "Stay," and the herald called, "Stay."

At once Guillaume de Touron, too, raised his visor. The music stopped and the fighting died down. The men stood where they were, breathing heavily, trying to calm their quaking mounts. Soon they began to drink, and to offer one another German ale and Avignon wine from hairy flasks. The musicians, of their own accord, immediately began to play a different tune. While the officers were still busy separating the last hot-blooded skirmishers, laughter had spread all around, the warriors blasphemed and laughed.

Among the Germans there was a holy physician. He and his assistants went through the battlefield and picked out the wounded from the dead. He tended the wounded on both sides and the dead were cast all together into the well, after sufficient water had been drawn for everyone's needs. The casualties numbered fewer than a dozen dead, all from the lower elements on both sides, and their death did not mar the feelings of brotherhood which quickly sprang up of their own accord around common campfires. To those who forgive shall it be forgiven. As evening fell the priests celebrated a great mass, and in the night both sides together slaughtered cattle, said grace, ate, and drank. Toward dawn they exchanged women servants.

And so, toward dawn, Claude Crookback, drunk and foam-flecked, was sent to appease the knight from Brunswick with fifty pieces of silver as a toll and the price of peace, since Guillaume de Touron and his men were the smaller party.

Later, as the sun rose, Christian knight saluted Christian knight and both groups went their separate ways, holding high their banners and waving adieu. If sins had been committed, surely blood, prayer, and silver had made atonement. And the rain which came late in the morning, a very light and gentle rain, wiped away everything with its transparent fingers.

VII

Next day they came upon a Jewish peddler by the wayside. He had a pair of goats with him and on his back was a knapsack. As the horsemen came downhill toward him he made no attempt to hide. He doffed his cap, smiled with all his might, and bowed three times, each time lower than the last. The procession drew to a halt. The Jew, too, stopped and laid his sack on the ground. The Christians were silent. The wayfarer, too, kept silent and did not dare utter a word. So he stood, by the side of the road, prepared to buy or to sell, to be slain or to deliver a polite reply to any remark which might be addressed to him. And he smiled with extreme concentration.

Claude Crookback said: "Jew."

The Jew said: "Greetings, travelers. May your journey be blessed with success." And immediately he tried again in another dialect and in another language, for he did not know which was their tongue.

Claude Crookback said: "Jew, where are you going?"

And without waiting for a reply, he added in a honeyed whisper: "The sack. Open that sack."

Before he had stopped speaking the three Celtic half-brothers suddenly burst into shrill, loud laughter, very wild but entirely free from malice, as if they were being tickled under the armpits. The peddler opened his sack, bent down, and drew out an armful of knicknacks and gewgaws of the kind which are made to amuse small children, and said very happily: "Everything cheap. Everything for coppers. Or we can arrange an exchange, for things no one wants anymore."

Claude asked: "Why are you traveling, Jew? What makes you go from place to place?"

The Jew said: "Are we alone in the world, gracious knight? Can a man choose for himself to go or not to go?"

Thereupon there was a silence. Even the Celtic brothers fell quiet. As if of her own accord, the mare Mistral moved forward and carried the Count into the center of the ring of horsemen. The smell of the horses' sweat spread around, pungent and menacing. The silence became more and more intense. A secret terror suddenly seized hold of the two goats, which were held by the Jew on a rope in his hand. Perhaps the stench of the horses brought them a premonition of evil, and the goats were alarmed. A twin bleating broke out, piercing and shrill as the ripping of cloth, as if a baby were being scorched by flames.

At this, restraint was shattered. The Jew kicked one of the goats sharply and Claude kicked the Jew. The peddler suddenly began giggling with all his might, his mouth gaping open from cheek to cheek. Then, radiating a politeness which was not of this world, he wiped his eyes dry with his sleeve and entreated the knights to accept everything, the goats and the merchandise, as a free gift in perpetuity, because men of every faith are ordered to love their fellow men, and there is one God over all of us. So he spoke, and his smile beneath his beard showed red as a wound. Count Guillaume de Touron made a sign with his finger that the gift should be accepted. The goats were

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taken, the sack was taken, and silence fell once more. Claude slowly raised his eyes toward the Count. The Count was gazing at the treetops, or through them to the patches of sky beyond. A whisper passed through the trees, thought better of it, and instantly fell quiet. Suddenly the Jew thrust his hand into the folds of his clothing and brought out a small packet.

"Take the money, too," said the Jew, and held the packet out toward the Count. The knight took the packet with a weary gesture, closed his hand around it and concentrated his gaze as if trying hard to discover what hint the shabby cloth held for him. There was a remote sadness at that moment in Guillaume de Touron's gaze. It was as if he were searching for something in the depths of his soul while being gradually shrouded in darkness. Perhaps he was filled with sorrow for himself. Finally he spoke, and he said with suppressed pain verging on warmth: "Claude."

Claude said: "This is a Jew."

The peddler said: "I have given you everything and now I shall go happily on my way and bless you."

Claude said: "Now you shall not go and you shall not bless us."

The peddler said: "You are going to kill me."

He said this without fear and without surprise, but rather like a man who has been searching in vain for a complicated solution to a complicated problem and suddenly discovers a simple solution. And Claude Crookback replied softly: "Thou sayest."

Once again silence filled the air. In the silence birds sang. Infected with the autumn the land stretched to the furthest distance, quiet and broad, quiet and cold. The Jew moved his head up and down a few times, concentrating, contemplating, looking as if he wanted to ask a question. And finally he asked: "How?"

"Go," said Guillaume de Touron.

A moment later, as if mistrusting his voice, he wearily repeated: "Go."

The Jewish peddler stood as if he had not heard. He began to speak, and thought better of it. He raised his arms wide, and let them drop. He turned. He walked slowly downhill as though he still carried the heavy sack on his back. He did not look around. Then he cautiously quickened his pace. Then, as he neared a bend in the road, he began to run, slowly, cunningly, bent forward, dragging his feet like a sick man about to stumble and fall.

But when he reached the bend he gave a sudden bound and redoubled his pace, disappearing now with amazing speed, tracing with great care a zigzag course, and he did not stop running in zigzags even after the arrow hit him and lodged in his back between the shoulders. Then he stopped, twisted his arm around behind him, drew the arrow out of his flesh, and stood rocking backward and forward, holding the arrow before his eyes with both hands, as if a careful inspection were demanded of him. He stood staring at it until a second arrow dislodged the first from his grasp and pierced his forehead. Even now he stood where he was, and the arrow in his head stuck out in front, so that he looked like a stubborn ram, lowering his head to butt, his feet set firmly in the dust. Then the Jew uttered a single cry, not long and not very loud, and, as though he had finally decided to give in, he collapsed and fell on his back. He lay there without a tremor or a shudder.

The procession began to move on. Andrés Alvárez, the piper, traced a large cross with his finger over the fields and the forest and the expanse of sky. The women who followed the expedition stood for a moment beside the body, now growing cold, and one of them bent down and covered his face with the hem of his robe. Blood clung to the palms of her hands and the woman began to sob. Claude Crookback, who had moved for once to the rear of the procession, was overcome with a terrible compassion and walked behind the woman, comforting her in a soft voice with pious phrases, and so the two of them found some peace. In addition, that night they opened the peddler's sack and among a mass of old rags they discovered bracelets and earrings and women's sandals the like of which had never been seen in the region of Avignon, extraordinarily beautiful, which could be fastened and unfastened by means of a perfectly charming and fascinating yet simple little catch.

VIII

Autumn, a gray and patient monk, sent out silent, icy fingers and smoothed the face of the land. Cold winds began to blow down from the mountains to the north. They penetrated every covering, and the flesh stiffened at their touch. In several places toward dawn a fine, clear crust of ice had already begun to coat the surface of the water. The men's breath froze; their lips turned blue and cracked.

But the heavy rains of winter still held back, and the Count still hoped to reach the coast before all the roads became waterlogged. The sea held out the promise of a change, of some kind of break. He looked forward to beholding in the sea the reflection of the Holy City, bristling with tall, insubstantial towers, glowing white as warm snow, ringed around with rocky crags and deserts, bathed in bright sunlight—and behind this light another light.

And yet sometimes the heart is smitten by a strange hesitation: Does Jerusalem really exist on the face of the earth, or is she perhaps nothing but a pure idea, which anyone who sets out to find in the substance will lose altogether?

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They were passing through a monotonous gray landscape, like a long, low corridor. The melancholy of the frozen orchards around the villages was silent and terrible. To the outward eye all these plains stood open on every side as far as the horizon. And yet it was all blindly shuttered, and the travelers traveled on and on, and there was no way out.

Everything was overpowered by the fall. Sometimes the expedition marched for hours and hours on a moldering carpet of dead leaves. A venomous gloom took hold of men and beasts alike, a hidden, desperate gloom from which death itself would have come as a blessed relief. This soft, foul carpet, made up of rotting apple leaves and decomposing fodder, rustled crisply underfoot, producing a dull, monotonous melody which, after a few hours, imposed on knight and peasant alike a mood of silent madness.

So, like an inexorable nightmare, a silent procession advanced day after day over vast tracts of imaginary desert which at every gust of wind and every footstep sighed and murmured. The soul's life-blood was on the point of shriveling and disintegrating.

No one now doubted the hidden presence of a Jew in the company. In camp at night servants and knights alike kept watch on one another, feigning sleep, starting at each footfall, craning to catch every sigh or whisper, crying out in their sleep, striving to decipher the cries of other sleepers. There were occasional brawls, and some took the precaution of sleeping with a knife clutched in their hand. Secret conspiracies were formed, allegations were made, and everyone girded himself with silence. A few vanished in the night and never reappeared. A servant slit the throat of another servant, was betrayed and beaten to death. Andrés Alvárez played on his pipe, but even his cheerful tunes tore at the heart and heightened the mood of despair.

All along the way there rose the stench of squalid villages. The cloying scent of a horse's rotting carcass or the tainted odor of a man's corpse decomposing in a field. Overhead stretched low, thick skies whose grayish hues strained toward a deeper shade of black.

In this envenomed world even the echo of distant bells was turned to keening. Such solitary birds as still remained stood motionless on the tips of wet branches, as if being gradually absorbed into the realm of the inanimate.

They crossed overgrown graveyards, trampling over gravestones coated with moss and lichen, sunk into the embrace of the heavy earth. At the head of these stones stood rough, crooked crosses, two sticks of wood held together by a wooden rivet. These moldy crosses would crumble at a slight touch.

When the expedition halted by water-holes to draw water, those who peered into the depths of the water might have caught sight of an element which was not water.

Far, far away on the steep mountain slopes one could see, for an instant, between patches of streaming mist, the vague outlines of stone-built castles—lingering monasteries, perhaps, or the remains of ancient fortifications ruined even before the coming of the faith. Below them the river and its tributaries rushed furiously in their tangled courses, as if they too were desperately trying to escape.

Over everything there came at dusk a desolate, sinister power of incredible malignity, the screeching of birds of prey or wildcats. These regions were gradually being coated in rust, rotting with it to the point of death. And so Jerusalem ceased to be regarded as a destination, as the arena of glorious deeds. A change took place. Men would break the long silence to say, "In Jerusalem."

And one man among them began to realize, with the gradual dawning of an inner illumination, that the Jerusalem they were seeking was not a city but the last buttress of a guttering vitality.

IX

This chapter of Claude's chronicle bears unambiguous witness to the force of the destructive powers which continuously emanated from the hidden presence of a malicious element that had insinuated itself among the crusaders. No longer content with an external watch, they now appointed an internal watch as well. A few knights were detailed to eavesdrop unobtrusively. Other knights were instructed to keep watch on these. Claude Crookback was in a position to keep those whom he mistrusted away from the Count's presence and to surround him with those who met with his favor. Conspiracies, false accusations, and secret intrigues were rampant. In this thick, dank atmosphere of suspicion and malignant terror Claude blossomed and flourished like some swamp plant. And yet he too was infected by the thickening fear.

Claude wrote:

"There is a stranger in our midst. Every night as we all call on the name of Jesus Christ one of us calls with a false voice and that man is Christ's enemy. One night in the third watch a hidden hand extinguished all the fires, and in the darkness there came a shout in a language which was not the language of Christian men. An enemy of Christ is concealed among us, a wolf among God's flock. That same hand which put out the fires in the night is also killing our horses, which are dying in agony one after another from an ailment which is completely unknown where we come from. As we approach the villages the villagers are warned in advance to conceal their

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provisions, their women, and their horses in the forest. The Jews everywhere sense our approach, and the countryside, which is hostile to us, shelters them. There is an evil in our midst. Someone among us is not one of us. He has been sent to deliver us up to the forces of defilement. O God, have mercy upon us, grant us a sign before we all perish, body and soul. Is it not for Thy sake that we walk this path of hardship and suffering? Is it not to Thy city that we are journeying—and if we do not end there, where shall we end?

"The spirit of our men is already weakened by fear of the intrigue which is being fomented in our midst, and there are some on the fringes of our contingent who seek to turn back the remaining horses and return home empty-handed. Our lord Guillaume de Touron now rides all alone some way ahead of the party and no longer looks around, as if it is all one to him whether the others are still following him or not, as if he is traveling on alone to Jerusalem.

"Three mornings ago the Count drew up all the travelers in a row, beginning with the knights and concluding with the servants, the hangers-on, and the women, and subjected everyone to a penetrating scrutiny. He ended by suddenly calling on the Jew to fall to his knees at that instant, in that very spot, whoever he might be. Then, in total silence, he turned his back on the men and mounted his mare, slowly, as if he were ill. At first light the next day one of the women was found with her throat cut and with the point of the cross which she wore round her neck buried in her breast. It was I myself who closed her eyes and drew the pointed cross out of her flesh, without wiping the blood off it. O God, where are You leading Your flock, and what will become of us tomorrow and the day after?"

And again Claude writes in his chronicle, in a spirit of humility and submission to divine judgment:

"In the course of this morning my lord the Count summoned me to follow him to the other side of the hill. When we were out of sight of eavesdroppers my lord said to me, 'Claude, you know; why do you keep quiet?' And I swore in the name of Christ, and in the name of my lord's late sister, who was my father's wife before he married my mother, I swore that I did not know, and that I was very much afraid. Then my lord the Count continued in a voice at whose memory my heart is rent with love and terror, 'Claude—are you really Claude?'

"I record here the words with which I have cried out to God all day: O God, behold us: We are being consumed by evil. Deliver us, O Lord; Thou hearest and Thou canst prevail. Sinners though we be, have compassion upon us. Are we not journeying toward Thee day and night?"

Happy is the man who pours his heart out in his prayer: Even if he cry out of the depths his prayer is answered.

A few days later, when the expedition had made a detour around the walls of Tortona and was pressing on eastward, the plague left the horses and even the weather grew slightly warmer. The farmers yielded large numbers of horses which sufficed for riding until better ones could be found. In one of the villages the three Celts succeeded in sniffing out great hoards of good provisions, cheeses and rye and fodder, all in one cellar, with hardly any bloodshed. Along the way we came upon two mule drivers carrying casks of wine, and we enjoyed the wine for several days. We also met a mendicant monk who sprinkled us with holy water and renewed the blessings of the Church.

And so it seemed as if our fortunes had taken a turn for the better. We did not stint our prayers and thanksgivings. Even the winter rains did not only continue to hold off, but even receded into the distance; for four days a benevolent sun shone down upon us. The Count distributed silver coins. The sound of singing was heard again as we set out in the morning, and Andrés Alvárez, the piper, played us merry tunes on his pipe. And at the same time we began to draw nearer to communities of Jews.

X

We began to draw nearer to communities of Jews, and our days grew brighter. Activity brought with it a new spirit: Discipline improved, and industry and inventiveness reappeared among us. Some of the blazes we lit fired our hearts with joy, and the thrill of the hunt roused our slumbering senses.

We were not too ambitious. We left the Jews of the towns to stronger contingents. Count Guillaume de Touron merely passed through the remoter districts, clearing, as it were, the outer extremities of the ground—the Jews of a forgotten village or a wayside inn, or a mill hidden in a valley. Thus there fell into his hands small bands of Jews of the runaway or wandering variety. Even so, the expedition did not interrupt its eastward progress, and did not turn aside to track down fugitives or to scent out booty. They ploughed a single, straight furrow, not too broad. They did not even pause to look back and see what had been accomplished and what remained to be done. The Count imposed a strict discipline on his men, and refrained from bloodlust. That is not to say that they avoided plunder, only that the Count forbade his men to take pleasure in it—and the suppressed pleasure whispered seductively.

Claude mentions in his narrative one Jewish woman, resembling a she-wolf, who, with her baby, was rooted out of her lair in the depths of a haystack. She snarled, and her fangs were whiter and sharper than human teeth. She hissed violently, as if she meant to bite or spit venom.

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Her breast heaved under her brown dress with a turbulence such as Claude had witnessed before only in the throes of physical ecstasy or in women who had seen a vision of a saint demanding that they throw themselves on the fire.

This Jewess even managed to keep at bay the ring of Christians which had closed around her. Not a man dared to approach within reach of claw or tooth. She stood alone in the center, and her face wore an expression which resembled a yawn. A second glance showed that this was no yawn.

She began to wheel around slowly, bent over, the baby clutched in the claws of one hand, the other held out in front, the fingers hooked like the talons of a bird of prey. Her movement suggested that of a scorpion or a crab. Even if Claude imagined that this Jewess was about to pounce and tear out their eyes with her nails, she did not do so. Instead, she suddenly hurled her screaming child into the arms of the youngest of the three Celts, and threw herself down, rolling in the dust as if she had already been slaughtered. She did all this in complete silence, without pleading or crying, but in a fierce convulsion. Claude Crookback struggled with all his might to suppress the sobs rising in his throat. A blind, feverish urge almost forced him to fall to the ground and roll in the dust like her and kiss the soles of her feet and be trampled on by the soles of her feet. This urge burned in his veins like a flaming fury, and yet it was not fury. Hot tears ran down his beard as he put this she-wolf out of her misery with a short, sharp blow, thus sparing her the agonies of a long drawn-out death and relieving her of the ugly sight of the crushing of the child's head, a sight both sordid and distasteful to a sensitive soul.

The region was dotted with Jewish communities. There were some towns here which had opened their doors wide to them, in defiance of the ancient curse. These Jews had put down deep roots to drink the innermost sap, and were flourishing vigorously. They were endowed with prodigious powers of suckling and growing. In these villages numerous families of Jews had spread, buying and selling, hiring and letting. They had a total monopoly of the oil and flax. Slowly, calculating and relentless, they were expanding into wool and wax, putting out feelers toward perfumes and ales, timber and spices.

Outwardly they were calm, but a closer inspection would have betrayed a nervous muscular spasm in their faces, like the ripples on the skin of a deer standing in feigned repose, poised for flight. Our language flowed from the mouths of these Jews as smooth as oil. Our silver seemed to pass into their hands of its own accord, following the natural tendency of things to roll downhill.

Thus the Jews were past masters at gathering and hoarding, exchanging one thing for another at a favorable moment and concealing one thing inside another in times of apprehension. They seemed devilishly dexterous, evasive by the very nature of their breed. The very ground seemed to become pliant under their feet, and they exuded over everything around them a kind of sticky, transparent resin. They could arouse sympathy or confidence, terror or amusement in the Christians at their will. They were the pipers and we were the pipe in their hands, we were the dancing bear.

Many peasants in these regions put their faith in the Jews. Knights enticed followers to accompany them to Jerusalem with silver borrowed from the Jews. The wounds of our Lord and Saviour opened anew at the sight, and His blood spilled afresh. Even great lords, even priests and bishops were accustomed in these parts to invite Jews into their very hearths, and unawares they slowly sold their souls. Some even trusted the Jews with power. So it happened that hereabouts certain Jews had risen to such heights as to be able to exercise power behind the scenes, and to pass on moral contagion to the Christians. Twice Guillaume de Touron's band was met on the way by armed guards or even tainted priests, their swords raised as a barrier between him and the Jews, setting at nought God's curse.

In short, these Jews had raised up a shadow-Judea at the foot of the Cross, spreading all around, extending the reign of hostile forces into Christian lands. To borrow a simile which reappears several times in Claude Crookback's chronicle, the Jews were like a band of strange minstrels wandering noisily through a primeval forest. Undoubtedly there was some sweet and desolate enchantment in their music, but the forest had a music of its own, deep and dim, and it would not tolerate for long another tune.

One day Guillaume de Touron rode at the head of his men into a group of hovels, on the edge of a small village called Ariogolo, which were inhabited by Jews.

As often happened, they had scented what was coming and had escaped into the forest. A single spokesman came to meet the knights, to negotiate a ransom, and to obtain sympathy. He also wanted to rescue from the fire a house full of old books, some of which, he claimed, were a thousand years old. Jewish books, written backward.

This man was lean and lanky; his beard was fair and his shoulders strong. Even in his manner there was nothing to suggest his base origin. His movements were few and economical, he seemed calm, and he spoke in the measured tone of one who loves words and is their master. He came out of the house toward the leading horsemen and inquired who was in command. Before they had time to speak or move his glance rested on the Count and he said, "He is the one." Then he strode boldly between the horses, almost brushing them with his shoulders, took up his stand in

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front of our lord Guillaume de Touron and said: "I was looking for you, my lord. This is your expedition."

The Knight squinted, weighing with his glance the figure before him, and immediately perceived the strength of his determination. He twisted his lips and said: "You were looking for me."

"I was looking for you, my lord."

"What are you offering, Jew, and what do you want to take?"

"A houseful of holy books. And if you are in great need of money then all the rest of our houses. Payment in cash."

A faint smile, grim and rare, passed over Guillaume de Touron's face and vanished. For an instant a peasant-like expression, full of greed and loathing, played around his lips. Then his glance froze. Coldly he said: "Gold. Copper coin has no currency in the places to which I am going."

The man said: "Great quantities of gold."

Guillaume de Touron said: "You, Jew, stand on the house which you want to save from the fire, and the fire, by God's grace, will choose what to consume and what to leave untouched."

The Jew said: "Very well. You set fire to the southern side. The wind is blowing from the north. By God's grace there is a broad stream in between. The fire, as you say, will choose, by God's grace, what to consume and what to leave untouched."

The Count paused. Once again a dry smile flitted across his face. Then, twice as stern, he said: "My dear Jew, you are not afraid. Why are you not afraid of me?"

As though in sudden sympathy the Jew uttered a short, bright, laugh, carefully modulated by a deep insight, and answered: "I give, my lord, and you want to take."

"And if I take and then kill and burn."

"But you will swear, my lord, in the name of your Saviour. Before you swear you shall not see the gold."

"And if I take by force, Jew?"

"You and I, my lord, are in the hands of a power which is greater than you or me."

"Well then," said Guillaume de Touron, in a dark tone of voice. "Well then, give me the gold. Right away. You have spoken long enough. Give it to me now."

As the Count uttered these words the nearest horsemen began to touch the Jew lightly with the tips of their lances, as if testing the thickness of the bark on a tree trunk.

The man said: "The gold is buried in the field and the spot is buried in my heart."

Guillaume de Touron said: "Then get up and go to the place. Now."

The Jew shook his head in resignation, as if disappointed at the clumsy narrow-mindedness displayed by his interlocutor. He said with exaggerated deliberateness, in the tone one would use with a stubborn peasant: "But my lord, I have not yet had your lordship's oath. Your time is short and your way is long."

"Go," said the Count. "Go and lead me to the house you spoke of."

The handsome Jew motioned with his chin.

"That is the one. The books are there."

The knight raised his voice slightly, and calling to Claude Crookback he said: "Claude, have the house and all the houses burned, and see that the Jew is not killed quickly, but slowly and patiently, and meanwhile tell them to turn the horses out into the field to graze and to send the servants down to the river to wash themselves before Mass—yesterday they stank to high heaven."

They began to beat the Jew at noon. Toward evening they branded him with red-hot irons. Then they soused him in salt water and asked him about Judas and Pontius and Caiaphas. They took him out of the salt water and crushed his testicles, as Claude had read in one of the books when he was a boy, and as it was written in the same book they made him drink the salty water in which he had been immersed. Later, when they were dealing with his fingers, they questioned him on the subject of the types and allegories of Jesus Christ of which the Old Testament is full. As the twilight came on they put out both his eyes, and then, finally, he opened his mouth and asked them whether if he showed them the place where the treasure was buried, they would promise to kill him instantly, and Claude Crookback gave his word.

In the dark the treasure was dug up, and it turned out that the Jew had not lied and the treasure was very rich indeed. Then the Count told Claude to carry out his promise. The hour, he said, was advanced and it was not fitting to delay any longer the time of evening prayer, because the fire, which had burned right through the village, was dying down and the smoke was interfering with their breathing and making their eyes smart. And so they thrust a lance through the tortured body from back to chest. But the Jew went on crawling blindly hither and thither, and his blood spurted out, and he continued murmuring. So they beat him over the head with an ax-haft and called him dead. The Jew, however, was not dead. He sighed deeply through the hole in his lungs and large pink bubbles came out of him and burst. Then they stabbed him again in the chest, but apparently they missed his heart. The broken relic of a man raised a leg in the air and kicked about furiously. The people who were crowded around him wiped the sweat from their brows and consulted with one another, then ordered the servants to throw the tortured body onto the smoldering fire.

But the ignorant serfs were already seized with superstitious panic, suspecting witchcraft or portents, and stubbornly refused to touch it.

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Finally Andrés Alvárez, the piper, drew near, he who carried always a heavy stone tied around his neck to mortify his flesh. Alvárez fetched a long beam and pushed and rolled the remains of the palpitating body into a shallow pool. The spokesman of the Jews lay in the water gasping out bubbles. Even after the evening prayers he had not given up the ghost.

The Count gave orders to put off halting for the night and to ride on by the light of the moon, for the moon had come out, yellow and round and of enormous size. I gave my word, thought Claude, and I did not keep it, because the task did not lie within human power, and if it was the hand of the Almighty, then who am I? Not a leaf falls to the ground without the action of a purpose, and it is not for us to know what the purpose is. So it was by God's purpose that our Saviour died on the Cross, for it was God's will that the traitor should betray Christ so that the Saviour should bear our sin and carry our afflictions.

For four days more Guillaume de Touron and his men continued to plow the wild earth with their faith and to root out the hostile forces from the world. And at the end of four days, with fists of ice fury, the great rains of winter began to beat down.

XI

THE great rains of winter beat down violently and smote the earth. The vault of heaven itself seemed to collapse as the gray fragments of lead came down. The storm howled wildly in the forest, uprooting ancient trees, shattering roofs, and whipping the surface of the lakes into a frenzy.

So furious was the gale that it caught up wild ducks and hurled them against the mountainside. The water, usually a mild and submissive element, suddenly clenched into a fist and rose up against the massive rocks, toppling them with a single blow. All the rivers ran riot, seething and storming their banks.

Lightning flashed frenziedly from horizon to horizon, drawing dazzling, drunken designs over the whole width of the heavens. The thunder, in its turn, responded with its weird and menacing amen.

Now the wind would wrest the steeple from a village church and sport with it, carrying it off entire. The airborne bell flew swiftly past, ringing high and forlorn above hills, rivers, and forests until it was lost in the distance.

In the midst of the maelstrom at least one sign of order or design could be dimly discerned: All these tormenting forces worked with one accord toward rendering everything round, eliminating and exterminating anything which was pointed with all the violence of their stream, bending mercilessly everything upright or projecting, tearing at whatever was angular and forcing it to become a curve.

The tempest eroded and rounded off the heaps of dust, the breakers on the lakes, the backs of men scurrying with their last strength to find shelter.

Those wild powers which had burst forth to subdue the whole land were totally hostile to cross, steeple, and lance, horse and man.

In the afternoon the wind veered round. The air was filled with large snowflakes. After the snow came the hail. By dusk the earth shone white. All night long the lightning played on the surface of the snow with a dazzling flame of blue. Next morning the snow continued to fall and piled up deeper still. Whatever the storm had left standing the snow rounded and curved. The whole land was silently subdued and transformed. Nothing could stand in the way of the hostile forces. A new power reigned over the earth.

In that pallid glare the whole battered company fell to its knees in the snow and prayed to the Saviour. Lost as they were in that luminous wilderness, shrouded in banks of gray clouds swept by the wind, perhaps there took shape in some of their minds a fleeting vision of Jerusalem.

XII

THEY went on walking till dusk, seeking shelter from those simple elements which buffeted the flesh and penetrated deeper to conquer the sensitive soul: The pouring rain, the knife-edged wind, the blinding light, the silence. Everything was stripped bare. A handful of wandering fugitives. A long flight. A trap.

In the afternoon the wanderers found a roof to shelter them. This was a broken-down abandoned monastery, a stone fortress on the rocks of a remote mountain slope. Many years before, perhaps in times of plague, the last monks had fled to die elsewhere.

The building was constructed on an absurd, melancholy plan. A steeply-inclined wall, enclosing no other building but simply closing in on itself, in whose thickness were dug myriad low cells and warrens of winding passages, spiral staircases, recesses, doorways, underground vaults lost in darkness. There was also a gloomy chapel, disproportionately long, like a narrow, curved corridor leading nowhere but to its own end. The very form of the place was consumed with contradiction.

Neglect had eaten away at everything, at the crude stone walls and the Latin inscriptions, broken by cracks and crevices, which spoke darkly of the resurrection of the dead and the delusion of earthly delights.

On the door of the monastery one could make out a notice written in the local dialect addressed

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to would-be invaders, appealing to their religious feelings, cursing them violently and warning of the danger of plague. The writing was being eaten away by mold and rust.

GUILLAUME DE TOURON and his men broke down the door and went inside. The Count gave orders to unload, light a fire, and shelter here until the roads became passable. He was troubled or distracted as he issued his instructions, interspersing orders to ration provisions, take good care of the horses, and clean the tackle, with vague reflections on the subject of walking on water, urgent messages to the Greeks, remarks about sleep as a simple escape from space and time, adding an obscure comment on the blight which had affected the vines and the rotting of the lower layers of earth underneath the topsoil.

The men did not speak, but the walls began to make their voices heard. While the Count was talking, the passages, doorways, and recesses sent back a hollow echo. They re-echoed and amplified a word here and there to a suspicious degree. When Guillaume de Touron finished speaking, the building intensified the silence.

The walls were all in the grip of a gradual decay. Weeds burrowed in the crevices of the stone, nibbling greedily at the rot, their bloated growth forcing up the flagstones, and as they burrowed they almost seemed to squelch noisily, as if the building were composed of marrow bones at which the plants were lustily sucking.

And the smells. A pungent stench of ancient incense lingering in the cracks in the stones came and went by turns.

The servants dispersed into the recesses and passageways, not searching, not finding, startled by meeting each other suddenly in the twists of the tunnels, trying the echo and being filled with terror at the result, lighting fires in the hollows. The smoke spread out along the ground, disturbing scurrying insects and night birds or monstrous bats. At the end of several days it was impossible to count the men or keep them in order. One or two were stricken with silent madness, wandering in the dark passages without a torch until their shouts died down and they were forgotten. All count was lost of the days.

Outside the loopholes the realm of winter stretched to the far distance, endless tracts of snow on which the howling wind played a melody of darkness. The torrents of water had broken down all the bridges. Clearly there was no hope of escape until some change took place.

All day the men played dice. When it grew dark they lit a fire, which they fed by tearing off the doors and hacking away the framework with their axes. After that they burned the furniture and fittings of the chapel. Finally, they even began to break down the roof-beams to make a bigger fire to ward off the cold draughts which blew in through the roof that they were progressively demolishing.

These roof-beams were damp and musty. The fire drew out of them a venomous, gnawing effervescence, as if people were being roasted alive each night.

And so, subjected to the influence of idleness and boredom, the servants began to go to pieces. They began to degenerate at first from excess of ale, and when supplies of ale ran out they degenerated twice as fast from want of it. In the absence of farmers' wives it soon became evident that the women who accompanied the expedition were too few. They were squabbled over and squabbled with until some of them were killed and the rest fled into the snow. One of them killed three of her companions before they found her hiding in an alcove and slit her throat.

Even after the women had left the men did not mend their ways. The sooty walls were covered with obscene drawings. Here and there, when no one was watching, a man would desecrate one of the crosses, until they had to make do with the crosses of iron and feed the flames with the remains of the wooden ones.

Only the divine office was observed by everyone with an enthusiasm bordering on the fanatical. Morning and evening they would emerge from their various hiding-places and gather together to pray ecstatically. On the days which they considered, according to their halting reckoning, to be Sundays they prayed devoutly half the day. The lower elements burst into noisy weeping as they prayed. Sometimes Guillaume de Touron would deliver a feverish, rambling address, exhorting his men to love him, to love one another, to love the horses which were perishing from the cold, to love their own flesh and their own blood, since their flesh was not their flesh, nor their blood their blood. Claude Crookback, for his part, was steadily amassing a power of his own. He encouraged some of the servants to come to him and confess their old sins, all of which occasioned him lunatic delight. His chronicle bears witness to a morbid fascination with the nature of the body and its peculiarities.

Days and weeks went by. The last of the better elements in the party were disappearing into the snow to find their own way home. Those who remained battled with hordes of ravens which had also taken refuge there from the cold. They brought them down with arrows and stones, but others kept coming until the soul grew weary with them.

Outside, day after day, the soft, slushy snow piled up on the ground, and at night the wind beat relentlessly at the walls, dislodging loose stones and beams.

Worst of all, the Count was changing. Compassion took hold of him day by day. Something strange, a kind of hesitancy, tenderness almost, suddenly came over him.

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XIII

He would wake from a long sleep (he dozed for long periods of the day and night), get up, and begin to perform acts of kindness. In the first place, he shook off all his old suspicions and seemed to take pride in the handful of men who were accompanying him to Jerusalem. Secondly, he sought opportunities of exercising forgiveness. If he saw one of the men weakening, he would lay a hand on his shoulder and speak briefly and softly against sin. He began to address some of the more despicable characters as "my brother." From time to time he would pay frenzied visits to his mare Mistral, give her water to drink from his own cupped palms, and groom her with his fingers. On one occasion he assembled everybody in the broken-down chapel, held a kind of Mass, and solemnly adopted Claude Crookback as his son. If Claude had not restrained him, he would have gone on to adopt several more of those present. To judge by his appearance he was a sick man, but in terms of physical strength he was stronger than any man there, the three Celts included. It occurred to him to erect a sort of dais at one end of the chapel, and for several days he moved stones and fetched heavy planks. Then he suddenly stopped, and instead tried to induce the most ignorant men to learn Latin, and give up speaking "those Jewish languages." Once he fell to his knees, took off his shirt, and wrapped it around the foot of the oldest of the three Celts, a remarkable action, since the foot, though naturally unwashed, was in no way injured.

He demanded the constant companionship of Claude Crookback. At first he implored Claude to regale him with extracts from the writings of the ancient sages. After a time, he would wake up in a panic and call for Claude, and eventually he was unable to fall asleep without resting his head in Claude's lap. Claude, as was his wont, would talk on and on, and since he met with no rebuke he talked even more than usual. Day by day, authority passed from the Count to his adopted son, so that soon he could starve or flog men at his own discretion as the fancy took him. In his chronicle he wrote: "Earth, men, snow, suffering, death, all of these are but an allegory of the Kingdom of Heaven, toward which I am going, in a straight path, turning aside neither to right nor to left, and with a joyful spirit."

Then the snow stopped, and once more the winter rain fell day and night, in a tedious, unrelenting downpour. The snow began to melt on the hilltops. Thick mud covered the countryside. The cold became damper, a fetid, poisonous frost. Here and there traces of the road reappeared, winding among the hills. The road was waterlogged. Even in moments of despair, it was impossible to consider resuming the journey.

Within the ruined monastery supplies of food began to fail. Once or twice knives were drawn when the rotten rations were distributed. A humiliating disease broke out, causing all of them unbearable sufferings and torments.

One night a pack of wolves stole in, wild with hunger. Silently the wolves swarmed through the dark and winding passages, broke into the cellars, and tore the last remaining horses limb from limb. If the scent of the wolves had not roused the three Celts from their slumber, we should all have been in danger of our lives. The Celts leaped to their feet and fell on the beasts of prey with lances, torches, shouts, knives, and stones. In the firelight even the men's expression seemed wolflike.

After this incident Claude Crookback instituted a night watch. The men would gather together at night to sleep surrounded by heaps of glowing embers. The guards prevented the wolves from creeping in again, but they were powerless to prevent the terror caused by the howling which was borne in on the night wind, piercing the very marrow of the soul. And the soul contracted and responded with an inner howling of its own.

Early one morning, they caught sight in the distance of a dim form moving across the snow. It was a traveler, moving past slowly on the horizon, holding himself erect, feeling his way, a tall man wrapped in a black cloak, his head hidden by a black cowl. A wandering ascetic, perhaps, or a mendicant monk. The form did not respond to our cries and did not alter its course. The stranger passed before our gaze, pressing on slowly through the soft snow toward the opposite horizon. Perhaps he was deaf, or bound by a vow of silence. Besides him no human form appeared all through the winter.

The cold grew more and more intense, stretching to the very limits of its strength. The men's bodies were covered with chilblains. Those horses which had been rescued from the fangs of the wolves perished in one day. Their flesh was eaten half-raw, because there was hardly any fuel left to feed the fire.

A spirit of rebelliousness gradually reared its head, restrained as yet but menacing. Servants, their eyes inflamed, whispered together in corners. If Claude Crookback walked past they would suddenly fall silent or hasten to roll their dice. Whispers stalked about in the night darkness.

One day Andrés Alvárez risked his life climbing to the top of the crumbling belfry. He succeeded in setting the great bells to rights and in fitting them with new ropes. He believed in the power of the bells to drive out the spirit of defilement and to put new heart into the men. But when Andrés slithered down from the belfry and pulled on the ropes, the chimes which rang out were broken, ailing, blood-chilling. And from every corner of the tumble-down monastery arose waves of echoes, hoarse and pitiless.

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And so they abandoned the bells and bade Andrés Alvárez, the piper, pipe away and still the murmurs of the silence.

Andrés's playing could stir the heartstrings. His melodies caressed his hearers like a hand. Something stirred and softened within them. The firelight flickered gloomily on the circle of shadowy faces, coarse-featured and shaggy. As the notes rang out, a kind of spasm or passing shudder played round those cracked lips. The tenderness was almost more than they could bear. Like stones frozen in a sheet of ice, the slightest touch of warmth would shatter them. Andrés Alvárez roused in them a kind of craving, a repressed yearning. Suddenly someone in the circle of listeners would burst out screaming as if he had been stabbed. It was the scream of a wounded man who recovers consciousness and all of a sudden becomes aware of his pain.

His tunes were simple ones, such as one hears in the country in summertime, and from time to time Andrés would break into a soft, warm song, like the songs which peasant girls sing when they fancy that no one is listening. Some of the men joined in and sang with Andrés as if their lives had reopened with the song. Even Guillaume de Touron was stirred. This dwindling man sank his chin on his chest, and a last light passed through him.

He remembered his wife, not the lady Louise of Beaumont, who had died that summer of falling sickness, but his first wife, Anna Maria. She was only a child when she was brought and presented to him, and he too was a mere lad. She was beautiful but silent as he first saw her standing in the gateway, he looking at her, she looking down at her slippers or at the ground. And he recalled now, in this twilight, how he took her hand and led her out onto the estate, to the orchards and vineyards and pastures, and then into the woods, as his forefathers before him had been accustomed to lead their brides on their arrival. He recalled her dress, the color of oleander, and the startled look in her eyes, and the ripples of panic racing over her skin as over that of a quiet young filly. He recalled her prolonged silence, and his own silence, and the singing of the birds, the tree tops dyed by the rays of the sinking sun, the blossoms in the orchards with their scents, for it was spring, and the tranquility of the streams was caressed by the scents of evening. Anna Maria walked behind him, and he let go of her hand, which was trembling. Then, in a frenzy, he suddenly determined to make her laugh. He started neighing like a horse and howling like a jackal, went down on all fours and imitated a deer in flight and a bear in pursuit, then suddenly threw himself from a high rock into the stream below, emerged dripping wet, and fell panting at her feet, giving a perfect imitation of a dog begging to be petted. How pure was that distant silence! Then, giving in, she laughed and touched his hand with her fingertips, and he, a wet, fawning dog, nuzzled her hand with his face. As his lips touched her fingers it happened, and Anna Maria said, "You, you, you."

Guillaume de Touron closed both his eyes and gazed blindly at Andrés Alvárez, the piper. His heart told him that this place was strange and that even Jerusalem was not the goal of this journey but of another journey, no journey at all, no City of God, and perhaps Andrés is the hidden Jew, or perhaps not Andrés but he himself, for truth is so pure and only the eyes are blind, fire is not fire, snow is not snow, stones are thoughts and the wind is wine and wine is silence, prayers are fingers, pain is a bridge and death is home, is the touch, is the warm tinkling song "You, you, you."

Outside, as a counterpoint to Andrés's melody, snow and despair once more fell softly, smothering everything with a kiss of unbelievable tenderness. So it was that Count Guillaume de Touron stopped the music and said:

"Claude, this piper is not one of us."

Claude said:

"Father, have you not known Andrés from his youth? Did his grandfather not dandle you on his knee when you were a child?"

The Count said:

"Claude, why do you insist on shielding this Jew from me? He is hounding us, and it is his fault that we are lost."

Andrés said:

"My lord."

The Count, deep in thought, said sorrowfully, as if from a distance:

"Andrés, you are dear to me, you are a dearly-beloved Jew Andrés, and I must kill you so that you die."

Andrés Alvárez did not plead for his life, but curled up with his head between his knees and did not move. The Count rose, took up his spear, and stood beside Andrés. He leaned on the spear, his eyes closed. He was pondering or hesitating. He leaned harder on the spear, and a sigh escaped from his throat. He leaned harder still, the spear passed through his body and, as if clasped in an invisible embrace, he collapsed and lay still.

After the Count's death there were two more flights into the snow. Most of the servants vanished, taking with them what little food was left. Claude Crookback, leader of a party of nine crusaders, wrote, with a trembling hand, his eyes blazing out of a beard smeared with saliva: "The miracle is delayed. Claude is humbled to the dust, the saintly Claude is plunged into the depths of the abyss, but beyond the mire there shines a light, and I am steadily making my way toward it, to be purged in it till the very flesh perishes."

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THE horror of those last nights. The faces of men whose teeth are rotted, whose lips are eaten away by the cold. They shone white as skulls in the light of the night. The screaming. The laughter. They were turned to beasts, mauling their flesh with their teeth, falling to emaciated knees to worship the lightning which flashed across the night sky. And the visions. A luminous procession above their heads, figures of pallid ghosts, glimmering from the furthermost frozen distance.

On the last night there was a sign. Through the holes in the roof the dark clouds were seen to part slightly, revealing faint stars, and beyond the stars, a halo.

And so, finally, without horses, without clothes or provisions, without women and without wine, the cold tearing at their bare feet, to rise up and go to Jerusalem. Surely it was thus that they should have set out at the start.

Nine quivering silhouettes, Claude Crookback, trudging in front, Andrés, the three brothers, four servants whose minds were long since unhinged, through meadows shining white from horizon to horizon, walking over the white earth and under a white sky, on and on.

Not turning homeward—they had given up all thought of human habitations. Not even toward Jerusalem, which is not a place but disembodied love. Shedding their bodies, they made their way, growing ever purer, into the heart of the music of the bells and beyond to the choirs of angels and yet further, leaving behind their loathsome flesh and streaming onward, a jet of whiteness on a white canvas, an abstract purpose, a fleeting vapor, perhaps peace.

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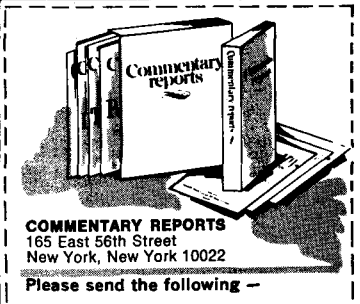

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Stars and Celebrities

Richard Schickel

LONG before anyone saw it on film, it was a famous scene: the actor Rip Torn, without obvious provocation, attacking Norman Mailer with a hammer, taking him by surprise and, in the subsequent wrestle, getting his ear bitten by the startled writer, who was fighting back with whatever weapons the memory of former street brawls suggested.

The encounter came when Mailer thought he had finished principal photography on *Maidstone*, his latest home movie (it cost over a quarter of a million dollars), but it was recorded by D. A. Pennebaker, the *cinéma-verité* film-maker, who was serving as Mailer's cinematographer. Without actually reviewing *Maidstone*, I want to use this, its final scene, as a point of departure for some thoughts it provoked in me about public performance—the art of it and the changing expectations all of us, actors and audience alike, now entertain for it.

Mailer is strongly committed to what, for want of a better term, we might call improvisatory movie-making. Toward the end of *Maidstone*, when he was under the misapprehension that it was all over, he called together his cast—many of them not professional actors but friends he had managed to enlist—and tried to explain what he thought they had all been doing during the several days they had spent on Gardiner's Island, off Long Island, making the film's climactic scenes. In essence, he told them—while Pennebaker's cameras continued to run—that he sees film-making as analogous to a military operation. There is an objective, there are plans, but as the "army" begins to execute these plans, unexpected contingencies arise and new strategies must be invented, under pressure, to cope with the new developments. The objective—the film's meaning—remains clear, but the means of achieving it necessarily change, and, in the end, the movie defines itself as the classic "existential hero" does, not through whatever ideal it may aspire to, but through the process of trying to attain to that ideal. Mailer's point was similar to the point Harold Rosenberg has made in discussing Gide's *The Counterfeiters*; the true novel of our time, said Rosenberg, "must be improvised out of events that take place independently of the intentions of the actors, and . . . it can have no ending any more than events do."

This, precisely, was the point that Rip Torn failed to grasp. *Maidstone* is a fantasy in Mailer's Presidential series and its purpose, other than as an episode in the continuing drama of Mailer's own celebrity (of which more later), is to examine the conditions under which, in our highly volatile society, a famous artist (in this case a movie director played by Mailer and, except for his occupation, indistinguishable from Mailer in viewpoint) might become a serious candidate for President and how such a figure might, simply by virtue of being a celebrity, also be a candidate for assassination, only slightly increasing the risk when he formally enters politics. (Informally, as Mailer understands, any celebrity is in politics whether he likes it or not, just as political figures are in art—or at least show business—as we now define it, whether *they* like it or not.)

If, however, Mailer gave his "army" to understand that their "objective" was to create a situation in which he (or the character he was playing) might believably be killed, his army—for reasons not entirely clear in the film itself—never quite managed to storm that position. Though some violence did occur in the scene where, logically, the Mailer character should have been killed, it was not directed at Mailer. Still, given his belief in the existentially self-defining work of art, that was all right with Mailer. In effect, the people had spoken and, perhaps, given a sign—that in times so desperately out of joint only an out-of-joint personality could hope to survive in public life.

But it was not all right with Torn. He is, after all, something of a celebrity himself and actors of repute take on projects, even such unstructured ones as this, in expectation of getting at least one good scene they can call their own. Throughout *Maidstone* Torn can be observed skulking around the edges of other people's scenes, but by the time he had confidently "wrapped" his film, Mailer had still not given Torn a fair chance to do his stuff, a chance to which, under all the laws and customs of his profession, he was entitled as the only "name" actor present. In fact, watching the

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film, the audience—conditioned to expect, no less than the stars themselves, star turns—is made dissatisfied by the under-utilization of Torn. Tantalized by glimpses of him, one keeps waiting to see Torn cut that demented energy of his loose, and the longer he is prevented from doing so, the more anxious one becomes. Thus, when he finally does take matters into his own hands, one feels, among other less exalted feelings, a certain sense of relief.

Probably it was the ham in Rip Torn that forced itself out in the end. Yet in speculating about what he did and why, some attention should also be paid to the theatrical traditionalist who abides vestigially in all actors and especially in one who has had his share of anti-heroic roles of late, is probably sick of the fashion for irresolute movies, and who may very well instinctively sense that men like Mailer, with their sophisticated understanding of the new celebrity game (which derives from the comparatively simple star system but is so much more complex to manage), are driving actors to the sidelines of public attention, just as Torn is driven to the fringes of this film.

Even if that reading imputes too much to Torn's sociological intelligence, he must still be given credit, at least, for keen theatrical professionalism, for understanding the dramatic imperative to prevent the movie from just sputtering out, as Mailer was apparently willing to let it do, by simply rationalizing his method and explaining how the very lack of a strong conclusion validated that method. Torn clearly sensed that *Maidstone* needed what he was prepared to supply: a highly dramatic resolution, a big finish. And so, indeed, he insists in justifying his action to Mailer after the wrestling match is concluded, and the director and the actor—with, of course, Pennebaker's camera still running—continue their argument verbally. One is aware, by this point, that Torn has been right all along. The scene does not "work" within the sketchy fictional framework Mailer has long since demolished (as Torn should probably have realized); yet it does provide the film with an ending and perhaps even with its chief rationale for existence. And Mailer now seems to agree that *Maidstone* needed this scene as much as Torn's aching ego did.

But when Torn picked up his hammer and started flailing away at an entirely astonished Mailer, I had the feeling that he was taking up the cudgels not only for himself but for his profession as well. He was a man in revolt against the definition of himself as a mere extension—a sort of unconscious plaything—of the *auteur,* who may talk about the freedom of the actors to improvise solutions to the problems encountered on the way to the objective he has defined for them, but who actually provides the sole organizing principle of the work himself—and usually much later in the cutting room when the actors have moved on to other concerns. This total surrender of self to director is growing in movie work, where, increasingly, directors improvise as they go along, or withhold knowledge of a script's resolution from their actors, or force them to repeat and repeat a scene (as John Cassavetes does) until they lose their bearings and begin to behave with unscripted craziness. As a result, the situation that had previously pertained, in which there were several power centers in the creation of a movie and the leading actor certainly commanded one of them, is replaced by a kind of centralization of power, an exclusive concentration of it into the mind and will of the director.

The point deserves some expansion: until very recently each film in which a particular star might appear was properly seen—if not by him, then by his fans—as but a single event in a much larger drama, namely, the star's career. He came to each new enterprise trailing behind him (and often tripping over) the wisps of former parts, and we were pleased or displeased in the degree that, in his new role, he fulfilled our unspoken expectations. If, in addition, he provided some small variation on his basic personal theme, some new characterological wrinkle (such as, for example, the self-parody that began to creep into John Wayne's performances long before it fully bloomed in *True Grit*), then we counted ourselves twice-blessed.

It might even be said hyperbolically that the movie star fulfilled some of the functions of the hero in classic drama. We grasped that his fate was predetermined, as though by the gods, in that he was limited by the very workings of genetics in the roles he might undertake; Wayne could not, for example, essay drawing-room comedy while Cary Grant (or Humphrey Bogart, for that matter) did not sit comfortably in a Western saddle. Moreover, we felt that, if the gods did not actually descend onto the stage at the end of the star's life to decree his fate, it was nevertheless, often as not, an inexorable one. Some actors, like Wayne, Henry Fonda, and James Stewart, proved to be durable human types with extremely long careers. Others were momentary phenomena, whose vogue passed quickly. Still others were tragically flawed, like Marilyn Monroe, and were unable to deal successfully either with the peaks or the valleys of their careers and ended up drunks or suicides or the most pathetic kind of has-beens—doing small parts on TV situation comedies or working in the soaps. It is not for nothing that one of the most enduring themes in our popular culture has been the one which was archetypically stated in *A Star Is Born.*

RECENTLY, however, things have begun to change. Show business, which used to be rigged in favor of the star, is now largely rigged against him. This is not to say that many who are serious (or at least sober) about their

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work do not find the new arrangement more congenial. Nor it is to imply that all the reasons for the change in emphasis are socio-psychological. Economics has a great deal to do with the matter. Star salaries rose to such impossible heights in the last decade or so that few if any of the names billed above the title could any longer perform the economic function they once did, which was to guarantee box-office success for any project they appeared in. Then, too, with fewer big features being produced, fewer stars are presently needed. It has become almost impossible for young actors to work in three or four films a year —as was the case when studios would put young people under term contracts and build them into valuable properties by the simple process of repeatedly exposing them to the public gaze.

But even if none of these factors had come into play, and even if the movies had not been economically reduced by television, I think it likely that the institution of stardom would have undergone the radical alteration we have been witnessing. To begin with, it must be remembered that stars were created and existed in a highly stylized world, that of the sound stage and the backlot, and although Hollywood prided itself on its ability to reproduce reality in those confines, the fact is that it never really did. The best Western or suburban or smalltown or New York street (to name the most common permanent backlot installations) were never more than good generalizations. They lacked the feel of actuality. They lacked specificity. They looked like everywhere and nowhere. We applauded the miracle of how close they came to natural and architectural truth, all the while picking up, out of the corner of our eye, as it were, comforting reminders that it was all a clever, pleasing fake: and, of course, a perfect setting for stars who were, like the sets themselves, generalizations from types, so much like us in all the unimportant ways that we were carried, all unknowing and uncaring, over the line into fantasy when they suddenly became untypically brave or witty or romantically apt.

Thus the beginning of the decline of the star system coincides with Hollywood's abandonment of the backlot and the sound stage to television. Today one of the competitive edges the movies have over television is their ability not only to go out into our own streets for background but into any street, no matter how exotic or inaccessible, anywhere in the world. The fact that it is technologically now possible to pack cast, crew, and all the equipment they need into a Cinemobile Systems bus makes it easier and cheaper to borrow reality as a stage than to reproduce or simulate it. And so it is that for ten or fifteen years now most of the best films have been shot *plein air* or on location.

But notice: the stars don't really fit here. Watching an essentially unreal figure like Kirk Douglas move around a New Jersey Italian neighborhood (*The Brotherhood*) or watching him drive on a Los Angeles freeway (*The Arrangement*), we are jarred by the inappropriateness. He belonged to a backlot world and he now seems right only when set into a period as remote from living reality as his own star personality is—in something like *There Was a Crooked Man*, an exotic Western rendered even more exotic by its curious setting (a prison in the middle of a desert). For what we really want in the new, totally real settings are anonymous faces, somewhat familiar-looking but not excessively so. Against such backgrounds the faces of movie stars stick out like a sore thumb: what, we wonder, are *they* doing there?

Another reason why the star system is likely to continue its decline is that, as with every other cultural commodity, so with the stars—our attention-span is shorter than ever. Thus we now see show-business phenomena like Elliott Gould who has gone from discovery to stardom to decline in eighteen months—an entire career compressed into a wink of history's eye.

But far more damaging to the institution of stardom than the working of movie economics, technological change, and the shortening of the public's attention span, is the effect of democratization. Metaphorically, of course, movie stars have always rubbed shoulders with celebrities from other fields in the gossip columns, but it was not until television in general, and the talk shows in particular, began to force them into closer, often accidental, intimacy with figures of greater substantiality and substance, figures so often superior to them socially and intellectually if not in physical beauty, that the stars began to suffer by comparison. The fact is that movie stars, until recently, existed in, depended on, remoteness to achieve their hold upon us. The task of their press agents was, largely, to protect them from intrusion, and on those rare occasions when they were placed on public exhibition, to make sure it was a controlled situation—a premiere, for example, or the kind of large event (a war-bond rally, for instance) where distance lent enchantment.

In his pioneering chapter on celebrity in *The Power Elite*, C. Wright Mills quoted Gustave Le Bon to the effect that "From the moment prestige is called in question it ceases to be prestige. The gods and men who have kept their prestige for long have never tolerated discussion. For the crowd to admire, it must be kept at a distance." It follows that a discussion program on television, a medium the prime power of which is to reduce distance, is the worst possible place for a star to show himself—unless he happens to be uncommonly intelligent, aware of how the power of the medium works and how to disarm it. (A common ploy, used by veteran and especially prestigious stars, is to insist on being isolated with the host,

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as Fred Astaire, for example, did when an entire Dick Cavett show was devoted to him.)

But most stars, though they have insatiable egos, also have a sort of innocence about them, which is why when they are belatedly politicized they usually talk and behave like such idiots. Most of them have no understanding of the nature of the enterprise in which they are engaged, often naively clinging to the notion that they are just actors, stoutly insisting that their obligation to the public ends with performing roles, and not noticing that actors who are only role players are almost never stars—unless of course they are English and knighted. Many of them search all their lives for "different" parts, complaining bitterly about type-casting, never comprehending that for a star—each of whose roles is only a single episode in the larger drama of his entire career—gross novelty is likely to be disastrous. Who needs a hero turning suddenly into a villain in the middle of the play?

It is this strange, even self-destructive, insistence on an attenuated self-definition that gets them into trouble. They like to think they are just ordinary people, despite their wealth and their isolation (no true star travels without a herd of flunkies, their function being to condition the psychic air around him to the temperature he finds most comfortable). But naturally, when they descend to less rarefied atmospheres where breathe variety headliners, real working actors, major and minor politicians, and authors plugging their latest books, the situation becomes quite different. Plunged on a talk show into a set of conditions he does not control—that is, into a reality that has been defined by someone else, someone who has his own fish to fry and can't be bothered with protecting him—the star is often left gasping pitifully for breath.

To put the matter bluntly, it requires a more supple and intelligent awareness of self and world than the average movie star possesses to manage the modern celebrity game successfully—and manage it Norman Mailer has, as well as anyone and better than most. For it is, of course, in the business of defining reality to suit himself that Mailer is most a genius. The drama he has constructed revolves around the question of just how great a writer he is. Will he finally produce the great novel he has publicly and repeatedly announced as his goal? Or will he, instead, redefine the novel to suit his talents, as he has come very close to doing with his brilliant ventures into journalism? Might he actually write his novel on film or through one of his candidacies for public office? Will he succeed in imposing upon all of us a truly lively awareness that in our time the great literary form is autobiography, chapters of which are to be written in all the different media, and the ending and meaning of which remain unknown to the author himself?

It should in sum be clear, then, that we are: (a) in a period where intelligence of Mailer's order is necessary to survive within the celebrity system; that (b) the line between fiction and journalism is being blurred not only by the presentation of imaginary toads (the stars) in real—much too real—gardens, but by the *cinéma-verité* directors who increasingly deal not with reality as they discover it but as they restructure it (a good example being those movies about rock concerts that are set up primarily so that movies can be made of them); that (c) stars—and other actors too—are and will increasingly be subjected to experiences such as Rip Torn suffered in *Maidstone*, namely, engagements in films that deny them that sense of dramatic closure which they require both for their own instinctual satisfaction and for the creation—and re-creation—of an image that will resonate satisfactorily with the audience, stimulating a desire for replication in future films.

I doubt that there is much the star or the would-be star can do about this situation. For the director, as Truffaut once said, "is the only one to carry the whole film in his head." As such, he is always potentially the great creative hero of our culture and the middlebrow audience is bound to see those who work for him as mere extensions of his artistic will. Moreover, the more intellectually sophisticated directors, whether they be professionals like Godard or talented amateurs like Mailer, share a desire to make movies that have at least the look of being "advanced forms of art" in which, according to Harold Rosenberg, "the indeterminacy of the act" is an underlying principle. They must therefore deny to the star those actions from which, in the past, he (and the audience) derived—often falsely, of course—the feeling that it was the star who controlled events. They thus deny to the star his traditional melodramatic ability to achieve heroic stature simply by resolving conflicts, and thereby walling off the work of art from the ravages of ordinary experience and of ordinary time.

I am not, I discover, entirely happy with those "advanced forms" that stress "the indeterminacy of the act," and as I think about it I am grateful to Rip Torn for acting upon his primitive and no doubt irrational distrust of Mailer's rather too comfortable embrace of indeterminacy as a principle, for doing his violent damnedest not to let *Maidstone* be just another happening. If there is any hope to be derived from the movie, it is in Mailer's acceptance of Torn's contribution as the climax of his work.

Without it, at any rate, we would have been denied contemplation of a most delicious irony. This is that by asserting his rights as a public person, Torn yanked Mailer right out of *his* public *persona*. For in the argument they have in the

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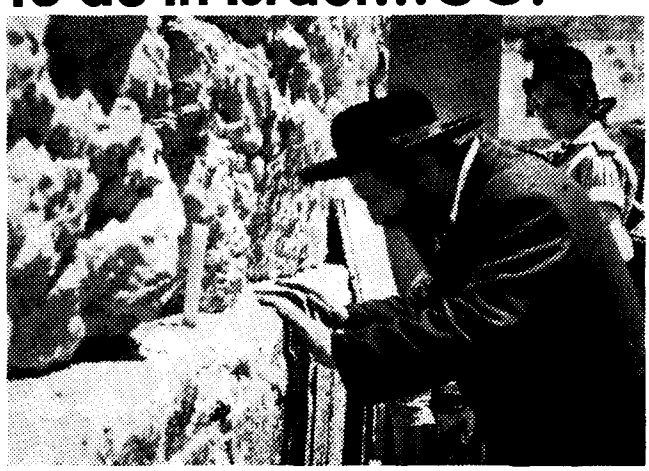
aftermath of the assault Mailer ceases, for the moment, to play the role of the avant-garde film artist and multi-media celebrity, and becomes, instead, what any of us would likely be in the circumstances—an aggrieved parent. What is truly unforgivable, he says, is that Torn assaulted him "in front of the children." And as glimpses of their frightened faces attest, Mailer was right to be angry on this score. In fact, one has never seen Mailer more appealing in public than he is here as a middle-class family man trying to protect his brood from the ugly realities of adult existence. And so, in a further ironic twist, Torn accidentally enhances the writer's celebrity, providing one of those off-guard snapshots of the famous that have traditionally enlivened mass-magazine profiles and which have the effect not of diminishing the celebrity in size but of humanizing him for the audience.

As usual, then, Mailer has provided us with material that forces us to contemplate a matter of major significance in the realities of our time, even though—in still another ironic twist—he required on this occasion the assistance of an actor giving vent to an old-fashioned, un-chic, and entirely hammy instinct. Lovely. I haven't wanted to think so much about a single movie scene in years.

So much to see, so much to do in Israel...GO!



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Berkeley: A Tale of One City

Paul Seabury

Berke-le-ian or *Berke-ley-an* . . . adj: *of or relating to Bishop Berkeley or his system of philosophical idealism.* . . .

berke-li-um . . . n [*NL, fr.* Berkeley, *Calif.*]: *a radioactive metallic element produced by bombarding americium 241* . . .

—Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary

ON THE Berkeley campus of the University of California, an old full-size portrait of Bishop George Berkeley, the 18th-century Anglo-Irish divine, lay for years stored in a dark basement under the women's gymnasium. Roger Heyns, so it is said, rescued it and now it is displayed on the staircase landing of the chancellor's residence. Some say it bears a strange resemblance to Heyns; a finicky person once explained the concealment of the Bishop on the grounds that to display such a representation in ecclesiastical regalia on campus would violate statutes forbidding religious proselytizing in state-supported institutions. Whatever the reasons for his long confinement or, now, for his resurfacing, few Berkeleyans today would recognize Berkeley on sight. Yet, as though to refute the Bishop's own doctrines, his ideas continue to exert strong influence upon the city named after him. For, as a philosopher he is credited chiefly with the theory that matter is merely a set of perceptions and, since our knowledge of anything is derived from our sensations of it, no object can exist apart from mind. Berkeley, both the man and the city named for him, must be seen to be believed.

That there is a mind-over-matter quality of the higher life in this city is nothing new. Many of its principal streets are named for philosophers, mathematicians, belletrists, and preachers. The tone of its culture from its beginning was shaped by the presence of a great university. Surrounding this high culture of learning are concentric circles of quasi-intellectual life, subcultures sustained or brought into being by their proximity to academic life. For years, the city has probably had more psychiatrists per capita than Rome has priests; but then it also has more nationally renowned divinity schools than even New York City; a whole area just north of the campus, which both attracts and produces clergymen, is known locally as "Holy Hill." In old redwood houses, overgrown with vines and shrubbery, one still can find molding volumes of the works of Mme. Blavatsky, the 19th-century mystic. Isadora Duncan's memory, and that of her nymphs prancing through hillside fogs in the Temple of the Winds, is still quite vivid.

Berkeley also now may be the world's bumper-strip capital. In times of acute stress, which now are frequent, colorful strips appear on thousands of tailgates and bumpers, preaching to unconverted motorists on how to save or abolish, liberate or punish, elect or impeach. When Dean Acheson remarked recently that "conscience used to be an inner voice of self-discipline; now, it is a clarion urge to discipline others," he must have had this place in mind.

In times of calm between issues, these strips shred and fade, like scar tissue on old elephants. So too do the issues they have represented. (There was a flurry of abortion-legalization stickers last year, but these are no more seen.) Short-lived causes flash past each other in fast sequence, as in a light show. Nearly all are deemed political, and even a gentle one which simply says HAVE A NICE DAY some suspicious doves regard as a right-wing slogan. For this, as someone has said, is the city of adversary culture.

I

GAINING fame seven years ago for being the birthplace of American student militancy, Berkeley this year has come close to setting another American first. In its April elections, highly organized New Left radicals, mobilizing a huge campus-area constituency of young people, nearly captured control of Berkeley's city government. The current Council, now divided four-to-four between moderates and radicals, on many a night would resemble a Panmunjom truce negotiating session were it not for the presence of hundreds of jeering street people. City politics, hardly tranquil in the past seven

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years of spasmodic, riotous street upheavals, now are impacted with agenda items so numerous, shrill, and ideological that they would strain the stability of a moderate-sized Latin American country. In microcosm, the fears and angers of a nation in cultural travail now are impacted upon a relatively small and, in outward respects, unpretentious middle-class community.

The national implications of this are by no means slight. With the eighteen-year-old vote likely soon to affect many other university towns in America, enfranchising millions of transient students, this second Berkeley "first" may become a model for imitation elsewhere. But it would be a grave mistake to think that the significance of this local event lies simply in a power-standoff between classic poles of American political extremes; in a community long known as liberal, right-wing extremism has virtually vanished from Berkeley. Agnew, were he campaigning here for office, probably would not carry a single precinct even if he ran against a convicted rapist. The city's truncated political spectrum enables Berkeley radicals plausibly to label local middle-of-the-road liberal Democrats as conservatives, and liberal Republicans as reactionaries.

The politicization of the city further is complicated by vivid crises of civic, educational, familial, and organizational styles. The energetic purposefulness of Berkeley's Left now sharply contrasts with the confusion of liberals who do not share its values, but who have been caught off guard by a likelihood few of them ever imagined.

II

By some standards Berkeley recently has been outwardly a very unpretentious city. Now with a sizable black population (which is not radical and is not increasing as rapidly as some real-estate dealers assumed), the city ethnically is stable, heterogeneous, and, by conventional standards, cherishes a tradition of tolerance. In 1942, when many Californians were in a xenophobic rage as the Japanese relocation plan was carried out in wartime fear, Berkeley ladies organized going-away parties for Nisei deportees, and presented box lunches and other gifts to them. Even in the more dilapidated parts of town it is now hard to find areas which by any stretch of imagination could be called authentic slums. When Khrushchev's party of Russians visited California in 1959, Berkeley served the current interests of American foreign policy as a kind of Potemkin Village, in which the visiting Bolsheviks could be electrified by a sight of happy Negroes living in pretty bungalows. Since 1960 Berkeley has been in the forefront of state social-welfare policies with respect to dogmas of school planning, bussing, open housing, and many other social services. Its school budget, swollen during the affluent 1960's, now is the highest-per-student in the state, and accounts for the skyrocketed level of city property-tax rates, which also are the state's highest. Its police, reorganized several decades ago with help from the university's School of Criminology, is one of the best-educated, sophisticated, and tactful in the state. For a decade Berkeley has been California's civic leader in social legislation; and its city-manager system, perhaps the state's best in the efficient implementation of it. The city now hovers between disaster and chaos.

From certain other perspectives, Berkeley as city has long been very unusual. It is a very "culturally dense" community, by which in this instance is meant an intense impaction of intellectuals and other college-educated persons in permanent or quasi-permanent residence within a very small geographical area. In addition to its 27,000 college-student sojourners (most of whom will soon be enfranchised), Berkeley now has an amazing number of college-educated inhabitants. The alumni office says that currently there are over 15,000 alumni of the University of California living in the city. Adding to this the numerous graduates of all other American colleges and universities, plus the faculty of the university itself, and all other college students now living in the city but attending one of the many other junior and state colleges in the immediate area, a conclusion would seem inescapable: there is probably no other city in the world with such an intense concentration of the educated. North of the campus, topping this statistical Mount Everest of higher learning, as has been previously noted, is "Holy Hill," a cluster of divinity schools and their theological inhabitants—the largest amalgam of Protestant religious training on the North American continent.

No wonder that this small city of 120,000 people with its benign climate and hospitable reputation has become a mecca for student dropouts from other parts of the country, and also a way station for thousands of young middle-class people disillusioned by higher education yet anxious to remain within its aura. The city also is filled with uncounted persons who have proved unable to carry their graduate studies to completion, or who protract the experience to astonishing length. (A recent university study reports, for instance, that, on the average, nearly fourteen student years are consumed in the doctoral program of the university's English department for each doctorate conferred.) This quasi-academic subculture, an admixture of frustrations, deferred hopes, and disappointments is not unique; but again, it is the proportion of this to the total mass of the city which should attract our attention. The situation is exacerbated by the new drug culture—which in turn has physiological and spiritual effects: lowered aspirations, a dull "present-orientedness," and a socially-sanctioned hostility to achievement norms. For some of these,

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a practical compromise with reality occurs: many of Berkeley's postal clerks, mailmen, computer technicians, etc., are college dropouts, while other unskilled secondary services are being filled with part-time middle-class subsistence workers. A commune cult rapidly spreads in a wide swath around the university campus, representing a gentle accommodation to this transiency and to this tendency to immediate gratification, this loose rejection of individual purposefulness and enduring relations with other people.

III

"In happy climes, the seat of innocence," Bishop Berkeley said of his new utopia—

Where nature guides and virtue rules.
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense
The pedantry of courts and schools.

But this seat of innocence is worn very thin. The authority of reason here has not fared well either: why should it be, one might ask, that a city set on such a hill of learning now should also have within it such strong impulses of unreason and anti-intellectualism, and (for its size) one of the highest crime rates in the nation? Why should it now be the center of some of the most powerful anti-liberal political causes in the nation? Why, also, should Berkeley now seem about to become the first American city committed to a Left politics which fails to draw basic lines of distinction between an awkward constitutional libertarianism and totalitarian extremism? The Black Panthers' birthplace is set almost under the shadow of the walls of the university—if this open university had walls, which it does not. In this literate city, its seven homegrown publications now include four underground newspapers (one of which claims credit for being the first of its kind in the country); the *Black Panther News; Ramparts,* a slick monthly for those who take their extremism with a chaser of crème de menthe; and the *Daily Californian,* a university-subsidized paper consistently engaged in the center of extremist politics, with a circulation larger than that of any other morning newspaper in the East Bay area. (The many excesses of this paper include, recently: incitement to attacks on individual professors for their political views; incitement to renewed violent assault on the so-called "People's Park"; condoning of previous bombings and trashings; etc.) With respect to the spoken word, it no longer is a matter of astonishment that, since the so-called Free Speech Movement in 1964-65, free speech here has become severely one-sided. Before that spurious dawning of freedom, figures of national importance, ranging from Right-Center to Left, appeared with frequency in public places on and off campus *and were freely heard for their views.* Secretaries of State, even Presidents, once spoke at the university. Another now disbelievable memory: in 1964, Mme. Nhu, sister of ex-President Diem of South Vietnam, actually appeared in public and was accorded a respectful hearing by a large audience of university students —few of whom, then, probably had any sympathy for her views or for her other imputed qualities. Nowadays, neither town nor gown is visited by public-ceremony speakers, whose presence might (as Eugene McCarthy once tartly observed of Stewart Udall's 1968 "controversial" appearance on the University of Wisconsin campus) be deemed by some "unwelcome." The Board of Regents no longer dares conduct its meetings here, in what still are its official rooms. Even when Senator George McGovern was recently about to speak on campus (the public arena is still free to some of those willing to adopt certain of the New Left dogmas), it is said that Congressman Dellums advised him in advance not to take any questions—"My supporters," he said, "ask stupid ones."

IV

Some national observers of the recent Berkeley elections paint a picture of the local New Left which Berkeleyans of any persuasion would find difficult to recognize. In *Newsweek,* for instance, Joseph Morgenstern wrote an article, "New Blood and Brains," making of the April Coalition a kind of updated urban version of the Kennedy smart set which came to Washington in 1961. The new mayor, Warren Widener, comes out as a soft-spoken young black attorney, his home bookshelves full of Harvard Classics, and his Porsche impatiently waiting outside to "go through all five speeds out on the freeway." Loni Hancock, the Rosa Luxemburg of the radical trio, emerges as a housewife and "Brownie troop leader." A delight in the city's diversity engages all of them. "'It's a freaky town,' Bailey says." The Coalition's platform, says *Newsweek,* aside from its anti-war plank and its now defeated police referendum, is said to be "fairly unexceptional." But such clearly is not the case. If, as Morgenstern opaquely remarked, Loni Hancock "sees Brownies differently than your average Brownie leader," this may be because her platform, and that of the other two elected radicals, favors the right of juveniles to attend X-rated movies, and to smoke and drink alcohol at the age of ten. "The most impressive thing about the would-be experimenters," Morgenstern further noted, "is how much they like their lab, how they respect its tools and resources." But the Coalition also favors abolition of the city-manager system. It advocates means by which the city might prosecute university professors and administrators engaging in (undefined) war and insurgency research and in re-

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search on Third World politics. It calls for purging school libraries of "role-based" books which might be uncongenial to Women's Lib. It advocates devolution of much of city authority basically to "neighborhood councils." It would forbid business firms from "running away to escape unionization, and would require them to insure adequate severance pay . . . to workers if the firm does leave." It would forbid private employment agencies in Berkeley. It advocates a city-sponsored plebiscite on the legalization of marijuana and psychedelic drugs; everyone over sixteen would vote in this. Much of this, especially the neighborhood control theme, comes from the thoughts of Tom Hayden, Berkeley's resident theoretician. Hayden, writing in *Ramparts* shortly before the April Coalition was formed, saw in the impending elections and the Panther-drafted police-control amendment the means of "destroying the occupier status of the police," who, after controls were imposed on them by neighborhood councils, would cease "attacking demonstrators," and instead commence "warning merchants that their criminal practices will make it impossible for their property to be protected." As Hayden put it, it was clear that such proposals, even if adopted by Berkeley voters, would likely conflict with state laws, and would be fought by the governor and in the courts. But even defeat of the police measure "will drive home once again the necessity for revolutionary organization."

The sudden appearance in town of the black militant D'Army Bailey, toughest of the new Council members, suggests the possibilities which inhere in a professional, manipulative political organization in a city with a huge franchised transient "campus community." Like his other two fellow radicals on the Council, Bailey—a young Yale Law School graduate who does not practice law—is a newcomer to the city. Virtually unknown in the East Bay area, he moved into the city ninety days before the election—the minimum period needed to satisfy the state's liberal residence laws for voting and for candidacy. He then obtained endorsement for his candidacy from a self-styled Black Caucus at a meeting attended by him, his running-mate Ira Simmons, and six others; he then received the endorsement of the April Coalition. Investing $26,000, nearly all of it apparently his and Simmons's own money, in a whirlwind campaign, he and Simmons narrowly squeezed through Berkeley's outmoded election system, which awards victory to the highest vote-getters on a candidate list which this time was as long as a Chinese-restaurant menu.*

While some of the national press, the New York *Times* especially, hailed the April Coalition victory as evidence that radicals could be brought inside the system, in Bailey's case and that of his two running-mates, Ira Simmons and Loni Hancock, the implications are not reassuring. Bailey's decision to move to Berkeley, for example, was based, he says, on no interest in the city per se, but rather on its possibilities as a base for organizing "progressive" forces, to create "power bases" on the Left dependent "on the unity of progressive forces." Convinced that the "system" cannot be made to work, he feels his own election to the Council will make it further possible to show that "it can't be made to work from within" either. Each Council action can give the radicals the chance to expose the system; the formula, then, similar to that of Hayden's with respect to the police-control initiative, is to come in with "well-researched proposals" which the Council (its non-radical members, that is) can then turn down. Viewing the bomb-throwing extremists as "crazy," Bailey says his strategy is like that of Western European Communists, who have learned to exploit constitutional and parliamentary arrangements in order to expose them. No advocate of "overnight revolution," Bailey sees white Americans as pre-1933 Germans; since they tolerate fascist-type actions, and repression, any physical confrontation with them now would only see the right-wing win. Shortly after his election, Bailey commenced to use his new office as a means to radicalize black youth in Berkeley, addressing a compulsorily-segregated assembly of black students during school hours at Martin Luther King Junior High School, after a march through the street to confront the school superintendent with new demands (an event, incidentally, which the school principal forbade non-black students to attend).

V

In his *Future of American Politics* Samuel Lubell back in the 1950's coined the term "the politics of revenge" to explain the motivations, if not the influence, of many right-wing isolationists in the 1930's and 1940's who, in vicious struggles against the Roosevelt administration and later the Truman administration, gave vigor to the anti-Establishment crusade of that time. Their voting strength he found among German- or Irish-Americans who were maligned as traitors (or whose fathers were) during World War I. The sweetness of revenge lay, finally, in the damage they were able to wreak upon liberals in the McCarthy period. Something analogous can be seen here, in Berkeley, in microcosm, although its political base is to be found not on the Right but on the Left. There are in the city still many of the Old Left, and their children, who well remember the Red scares and purges of the 1940's and 1950's, the loyalty oaths, and the fates meted out in various ways to the Rosenbergs, Sobell, Judith

* Both of the two elected black radicals received about as few votes as the police referendum, which was solidly defeated by more than a two-to-one margin; but the inability of moderates to agree on a common slate badly divided their votes.

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Coplon, and their California equivalents in the years between 1947 and 1955. For many of these, the renaissance of radical politics in the city, although now in others' hands, and however its outward manifestations may possibly offend their squarish tastes, must appear as a delayed delight.

During the 1950's and through the brief Kennedy period, the Old Left in Berkeley for the most part lay dormant, confining its cautious crusades to such niches and corners of various "liberal" institutions as cooperative nursery schools, the Consumers Co-op (one of the largest and best in the nation), the Society of Friends and its Committee on Legislation, the East Bay American Civil Liberties Union, the FM listener-supported station KPFA, etc. In such organizations, as in microcosm, their power struggles seemed to some observers as significant as a revival movement in a leper colony. Their "issue politics" gave rise to various unexceptionable causes like pumping fluoride chemicals into reservoirs (a crusade now conveniently forgotten in the current ecology ambiance), but in those days it was the Right which had the credentials of opposition to pollution of natural resources.*

To say that this "issue-oriented" politics of the Old Left has had a new lease on life here would be to put it mildly. "Issue politics," which a friend of mine refers to as the phenomenon of the floating phony agenda, means that the same issues and their sponsors float from institution to institution, organization to organization, throughout the city; items on the agenda of the Associated Students of the University of California shift with surprising speed into any one of a number of regular or *ad hoc* organizations in the city; now, the floating agenda has come to the City Council. The 307 agenda items of the April Coalition, ranging from the requirement that all city pay phones have long cords in order to be used by wheel-chair invalids and "small people," to the proviso for sending a Berkeley city delegation to Southeast Asia to make peace, means that from now on the Council will become even more of a cockpit for struggles over ideologically-freighted matters than ever before. Many proposals, such as that for city bicycle paths, summer transient youth hostels, more parks, have wide appeal; but taken together, they could spell bankruptcy for a city whose own resource-base hardly suffices for programs already in operation.

VI

THE Berkeley penchant for engraving global-agenda items on the pinhead of a small, yet literate university town could nowhere better be seen, over the last decade, than in the Consumers Co-op, which, now the largest in the nation, would be a prize for the New Left to capture wholly. In the Co-op, consumers come and go, talking of eggs and oleo. . . . But in Berkeley, a perils-of-Pauline struggle occurs constantly between Establishment moderates and an Old Left-New Left coalition obsessed with the possibility of capturing the Co-op's membership list. Consumer policy, once focused on decent prices and honest grading, now has broadened to include gastronomic strategies for perfecting the world and eliminating American evils.

The struggle wavers along a confused front in uncertain battle: Breakfasts for Panthers? Boycotts of grapes? Lettuce? South African rock lobster? Should stores close in order to protest distant Asian excesses of the Kennedy-Johnson-Nixon administrations? Should stores adopt policies of unilateral disarmament, forbidding police to engage robbers lest they suffer injury? (Two bloody, fatal shoot-outs have occurred after holdups in the Berkeley Telegraph Avenue store in two years.) Now, the theological issue of good versus evil, with its ambiguities, coils around the conflict of management realism *cum* economics, versus the New Left and puristic ecologists—or, to put the matter somewhat differently, between law-and-order people and those who would prefer burglaries to pollution. How best meet the problem of the skyrocketing incidence of thievery and shoplifting in the Co-op stores? Why, say the Realists, we will substitute plastic, transparent bags for brown ones, so that checkout clerks may better perceive loot concealed under a pile of potatoes, or other vegetables. No, say the Purists; for this would be coercive; human nature is good, while plastic bags, deemed non-biodegradable, are therefore bad. "It is true," writes Mrs. B. in a letter to the *Co-op News*, "that plastic bags are reusable, but the majority of plastic bags will be used just once and thrown away. It is just plain too hard to remember to bring plastic bags back each time. Even if the same bag is used once a week for a year and then disposed of, that bag still isn't biodegradable, therefore plastic bags obviously create pollution." In this literate subculture of Berkeley, for whose transient causes mighty Canadian forests fall to furnish paper pulp for handbills,

* On further reflection, I find this not to be wholly true: in the 1950's, the Old Right opposed the pollution of water supplies, but was tolerant of it when it came to atmospheric nuclear tests; while the Old Left took the opposite view. So it was too on more life-and-death issues that the two poles inconsistently advocated opposite positions: the Old Right, favoring the death penalty for adults convicted of capital offenses yet opposing abortion; the Old Left, advocating abolition of the death penalty, nevertheless advocated its legalization on a voluntary basis for as-yet-unborn innocents. Thus, the reverence for human life in each instance was conditional and, an outsider might say, inconsistent. The eclipse of the Old Right, in Berkeley at least, has made it possible for New and Old Left scavengers to grab up some of the old right-wing heirloom issues in the unentailed estate—for example, hostility to the city-manager form of local government and to urban renewal. The Old Right viewed the former as an octopus named the Metro; it was socialistic. Now to the Berkeley New Left it is seen as "incompatible with responsive city government" and they want it abolished.

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pamphlets, posters, and bumper-strips, it would to an outsider seem odd that these shenanigans could go on, but they do. Shoplifters, unrepresented in the debate save by those who blame their bad habits on an evil social system, have been the only group not yet heard from.*

VII

The chief objects of Berkeley's attacks from extremists of the New Left have been the city's police force, and its downtown business establishments. As the police chief recently remarked, "Few municipalities have endured as much civil unrest as ours." For the Bay Area as a whole, the 1960 San Francisco City Hall demonstrations against HUAC now are generally seen as the starting point for the plague of street politics which it has since enjoyed. For Berkeley, however, it was the CORE demonstrations of the early 1960's against downtown merchants which marked the local onset of political crimes on behalf of just causes. When these became during the later 1960's more frequent, larger, wilder, and often vicious, several dilemmas were posed for city law enforcement. Forceful measures to curb these might—as other cities now well know—paradoxically enlarge their fury, the size of the contingents engaged in them, and the possible ensuing damage. The Berkeley police, further, were not organized to cope with this new phenomenon in addition to their other duties. In 1960-70, the city spent well over $175,000 in unanticipated riot costs. "Urban guerrilla warfare," or simple "terrorist activity," appears to the police as a norm of civic life.

The strain on limited resources was further intensified by a striking increase in the general crime rate, and by the drug plague which accompanied, and intensified, it. The years 1967-68 were thus not only times of major stress—with "street-people" riots following each other in rapid sequence, and the city frequently embroiled with outside forces from the National Guard and the Alameda County Sheriff's forces and the State Highway Patrol. Vast damage was wrought on both the university and on local businesses, driving many small merchants out, and prompting the cancellation of insurance on many premises. With all this, the period saw the greatest leap in Part I (major) crimes—a soaring rate shared by Berkeley with other nearby cities which, with respect to political crimes, have not suffered Berkeley's anguish. The high Oakland crime rate next door still rose vigorously.

It was in this context, in 1968, that the Black Panthers' David Hilliard, the National Committee to Combat Fascism, and Old Left members of the National Lawyers Guild, first framed the Panther plan for control of police. Displayed as "community control," this plan—now repudiated by Berkeley voters—would have segregated the city into three main police enclaves, two based upon "racial" residential patterns, the third upon the campus area in which extremists, street people, communes, transient non-students, and many university students, now live (a district also including central-city offices and the downtown business district). Each of these would have had its own "neighborhood" police force, controlled by "neighborhood"-elected councils. City police facilities would have been disbanded. Since few of the mostly white force now choose to live in the city, and those who do have been subject to threats and consummated acts of terror, the control measure's requirement of obligatory residence of police in the district of their employment effectually would have wiped out much of the current force. One sector, the campus area, easily could have come under radical control; and in fact some optimistic radicals shortly before election were distributing application forms to friends for membership in this urban jacquerie. While supposedly designed to benefit blacks, this plan in the April election carried virtually no precincts of the city aside from the overwhelmingly white campus area itself. Berkeleyans elsewhere, regardless of race, repudiated a plan which would have formalized racial apartheid, in what has been California's most "integrating" city.

Alarmed by prospects of the plan's enactment, moderates and conservatives united to oppose it; but such was their long experience of opposition to each other that no common front was developed for a Council candidate slate to oppose the New Left's coalition ticket. Ironically, successful opposition to the control plan diverted moderate attention from the Council race itself; Left strategists abandoned the plan and left it to fend for itself on the ballot, focusing their resources instead on the candidates and winning all but one contested Council seat. A non-student political organizer from Los Angeles (posing as an authentic Boalt Hall law student in order to be elected—illegally—to the campus Student Senate and to mobilize the diversion of campus facilities to the campaign), managed a massive campus registration drive, which some estimate to have gained as many as 10,000 new young voters.

When Berkeley sneezes, adjacent cities run for inoculations; others reaffirm their hard-hat virtues and offer up prayers for protection against the

* At the expense of more paper pulp, it is still worthwhile pointing out the ironic no-win standoff devised by conciliatory Realists to buy "peace in our time" on this particular issue: it is agreed now that plastic bags henceforth will be used in all Co-op stores *except* the new Natural Food Co-op; this store will get to keep the old brown bag as a symbol of the ecologists' commitment to nature. But this is ironic, say some, since much of the most valued potential shoploot consists of expensive plastic-packaged natural food items and vitamin tablets, which will be sold in the Natural Food store. Customers will be able to hide plastic-packaged items in brown opaque bags. This issue, therefore, is by no means dead.

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pestilence. City elections in Oakland, for example, are calendared to follow Berkeley's by only several weeks; this spring they resulted in a rash of hard-line victories in that quite conservative town. When moderate Berkeley Councilmen recently were embarrassed by the refusal of their New Left colleagues to salute the flag in Council ceremonies, they agreed to abolish the salute. Now, the Council of the adjacent city of Albany each week salutes twice—once for itself, second, for its lapsed neighbor. But prayers are not offered up in Sacramento. The governor, who may well appreciate the political statewide uses of the Berkeley example, is quoted to the effect that while he will watch the new radicals' behavior with "unsatisfied curiosity," he has nevertheless no plans in mind to strike back. "I don't," he says, "live in Berkeley, and I have no intention of retiring there."

VIII

Rereading what I have written above, I notice signs of a personal habit of resort to irony in describing painful or unpleasant circumstances. In his *Liberal Imagination,* Lionel Trilling some years ago wrote, of the "conservative impulse," that it rarely expressed itself in ideas but only in action "or in irritable gestures which seek to resemble ideas." There is something to this even now, when applied to liberals. Many such in Berkeley who have experienced what I here sketchily recount, have proved unable to articulate clear and positive views concerning what to them is really so troublesome, especially when they are involved in what here passes for agonistic dialogue. Endless sophistic arguments arise even when the worst issue of local difficulties, violence, comes up. Metaphysical discussions ensue of whether causes or symptoms should be first treated. Reality can actually disappear in *1984*-fashion. So, for instance, the *Daily Californian,* last May advocating mass seizure of the "People's Park" on the second anniversary of Berkeley's worst public disaster, editorialized: ". . . by pulling down the fence we are resisting violence, not encouraging it." But our worst difficulty is that the "Thinking Liberal" responds guiltily to confrontations in which his own values are lobbed back against him as weapons by those who choose to employ such values instrumentally. I was going to add, "for their own purposes of power," yet this certainly is not true in the many instances of sincere selflessness which themselves can often be as destructive as the instances when virtue is cynically abused.

What is occurring in Berkeley involves a caricaturing or over-magnification of virtuous causes with which many of us have long instinctively associated. It is as though the harpstrings of the liberal conscience were electronically hooked to a giant amplification system; and all plucked simultaneously. Some, as in the instance of Councilman Bailey, pluck with calculated, cool deliberation; yet many do it innocently.

A crisis of liberal civic culture arises when its best substantive virtues—equality, liberty, fraternity—become so enlarged and amplified as to shake its procedural framework. For, when all virtuous things must be done at once, when all are interpreted with childish literalness, all suffer, many fail, and cynical disillusionment then replaces enthusiasm. An almost forgotten phrase of advice, contained in one of America's several national anthems, comes to mind: "Confirm thy soul in self-control," wrote Katherine Lee Bates in "America the Beautiful." When such beauty is said not to exist, any prudent advice given in the name of love of country is rejected as hypocrisy. But, even from inside Bishop Berkeley's imperfect, embattled town, Mrs. Bates's motto has something to commend it. Perhaps a future City Council might elect to blazon it on the city's official seal, which already contains a small representation of our utopian Bishop's face.

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"Never Again!"

Milton Himmelfarb

Do not be like your fathers. . . .
—Zechariah 1:4

JUDAISM is a tradition. The Jews are a community of memory, which is to say, of tradition. But tradition is what fathers bequeath to sons: a Jewish expression for tradition is "fathers' inheritance," and Jews pray to "our God and our fathers' God." The Bible emphatically and repeatedly commands fathers to teach sons, and the liturgy further emphasizes and repeats that command. Sons, for their part, are told to heed their fathers' instruction.

Remarkably, Jewish sons/descendants are also warned *not* to be like fathers/ancestors. "Like your fathers"—*ka'avotekhem*—is used negatively wherever it occurs in the Bible (in II Chronicles 30:7,8, besides Zechariah): "do not be like your fathers," who ignored the Lord's earlier prophets; "and do not be like your fathers," who disobeyed the Lord; "do not be stiff-necked, like your fathers." And similarly with *ka'avotam*, "like their fathers" (which occurs twice in Psalm 78): "let them not be like their fathers" and "they were treacherous like their fathers."

So that while tradition is the authority and example of fathers, in the Jewish tradition not all fathers are authoritative and exemplary. Isaac is worthy of receiving and bequeathing the blessing because he obeys his father Abraham, but Abraham was given the blessing in the first place because he disobeyed his father, the idolater Terah. Honor thy father and thy mother—provided they honor *their* Father, Who is in heaven.

Even when Jews were traditional, then, it was only the right kind of father upon whom a son was commanded to model himself. Since for some time now most Jews have not been especially traditional, the fathers' presumptive right to obedience and imitation has been all the more in question. In the old days a son was supposed to ask whether his father was a God-fearing man, in modern times a son has been more likely to ask whether his father is a man.

"Do not be like your fathers." For a young Jew today this may mean that the generation of the fathers, even those fathers who are themselves not traditional, have not been men; and that it is his duty to differ from them, rebel against them, by being a man. In what way have the fathers not been men? To go back no farther than the beginning of this century, we can instance Bialik's revulsion, in his poem *'Ir ha-haregah,* "The City of Slaughter," for the Jews who would not defend themselves with arms against the Russian government's armed pogromchiks. (That was in Kishinev in 1903. In Kishinev in 1971 the Russian government brought Jews to trial for the crimes of studying Hebrew and wanting to go to Israel.) Everyone used to know that Jews were good businessmen and no farmers at all, and now Israelis will tell you, more proudly than regretfully, that they are good farmers and bad businessmen. The Jews who did not fight the pogromchiks were storekeepers—"businessmen"—rather than farmers. Israel was the effort of Jews who agreed with Bialik to transform themselves.

It is easy for young Jews to see in their fathers a negative model ("Uncle Jake"). It is easy even for fathers to see in their former selves (e.g., true believers in the Soviet Union as the enemy of anti-Semitism) a negative model for their present selves. Fathers and sons can agree: "Do not be like your fathers. Never again!"

"NEVER AGAIN!" must have been used as a slogan long before *nie wieder Krieg!* ("never again war") was popular in Germany, between Kaiser and Fuehrer. Among Jews the currency of the slogan seems to date from the anxious weeks before the 1967 war, when Israel was threatened with destruction. "Never again!" we said, the "again" recalling what Hitler had done, had been allowed to do, to the Jews. Never again, we meant, would we let others fool us or would we fool ourselves about the intention of those who intended to destroy the Jews. Never again would we lean on that broken reed, enlightened opinion. Never again would we do less than all we could do. Never again would we expose ourselves to our own reproaches for having done less.

The "never again!" that 1967 aroused in us (to the surprise of many in whom it was aroused) was not altogether extinguished when disaster to Israel had been averted. It remained, available, for mobilizing us in the defense of Jews, or Jew-

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ish needs and hopes, wherever else they were attacked or threatened: *imprimis* in the Soviet Union, but in the United States as well. Never again would we incur the guilt, or the guilt-feeling, of 1933-45.

In these times, how do you answer an eighteen-year-old son or daughter who asks you why the Jews of America were so well-behaved while the Nazis were murdering the Jews of Europe? You can tell the truth, which is that we did not know, or did not believe, how bad things really were; that because there was so much anti-Semitism in the United States we were afraid of increasing it, afraid of giving even more of a Jewish label to the war, by calling attention to ourselves; that we preferred to see the big, unparochial picture, with the liberals among us more comfortable about denouncing the State Department—we knew how to exempt Roosevelt—for being beastly to de Gaulle than for not losing sleep over the Jews, and the radicals sure that "socialism" would cure everything. We can tell our children that if they had been living then, they would have been as we were and done as we did. But that is a less than satisfactory answer to give them, or to give ourselves. Never again!

A Jewish March on Washington, or more Jewish criticism of Roosevelt, might not have made much difference for the Jews of Hitler's Europe. The difference it would have made is for the Jews of the United States. We would feel less guilty. We might even *be* less guilty.

Moscow now is not Berlin then. The sclerotic Marxism-Leninism, the Great Russian chauvinism, and the Great Power imperialism of the Soviet apparatchiks are not the Nazism of Hitler and Himmler. All this is true. It is also true that Moscow, not Madrid, Athens, or Cape Town, is the present capital of anti-Semitism. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* has more credit with—as the expression goes—the ruling circles of Moscow (and Warsaw and Prague) than of other cities, Damascus and Cairo always excepted.

What are the Jews to do? In the Soviet Union some have done wonders. The intensity of Jewish feeling, in a land with none or almost none of the Jewish things that Jews in the United States (or Canada, or Great Britain, or France) take for granted: synagogues, schools, seminaries, books, journals, camps, clubs, organizations, movements, El Al; the courage, bordering on recklessness, in demonstratively challenging a government of jailers hostile equally to Jews and to challenges—that after so many years, in a milieu so unpromising, any substantial number at all should give proof of such virtues, Jewish and human, is not easily to be explained or lightly to be explained away.

Outside the Soviet Union, what we can do is try to make the Soviet authorities pay a higher price than their anti-Semitism/anti-Jewishness is worth to them. For Hitler the destruction of the Jews was a good so transcendent that no price was too high: his managers and engineers told him his war plants needed more and more workers, and he murdered the Jews who could have worked in those plants; his generals told him he did not have enough trains to carry troops and munitions to the front, and he took away trains to carry Jews to the death camps. By the high price Hitler was willing to pay, he showed the value he put on destroying the Jews. The Soviet authorities know they must pay some price for their enmity to the Jews; but for them, unlike Hitler, the enmity is not beyond price. If their Jewish policy costs them too much, they may relent. This is the reasoning behind the publicity and demonstrations by Jews outside Russia. Within Russia, the demonstrative Jews reason that if they make enough of a nuisance of themselves, the authorities probably will put them into prison, but possibly will let them go to Israel.

In the first months of 1971 the Soviet Union let more Jews leave than at any time since the early years after the Revolution. This was due above all to the Russian Jews themselves. We hope it was due to us, too, a little.

In the United States no Jew who cares about the Jews of the Soviet Union thinks we have done enough. (Except that Lubavitcher Hasidim, for instance, who care a great deal, have their own tactics and philosophy, and they think we are provoking Caesar imprudently.) Those who say we have not done enough will often blame our organizations and institutions. These, they believe, are inept, or are lukewarm, or because of rivalry get in each other's way and harm the common enterprise.

Ineptness, lukewarmness, and rivalry are the friction of social machines, which can only be reduced, not eliminated. For the Russian Jews, American-Jewish organizations and institutions have worked with less friction than normal. The dissatisfaction we express with our organizations and institutions is really dissatisfaction with ourselves.

We need no particular bravery, nor any extraordinary intensity of Jewish feeling, to attend meetings, to write a Congressman, to send a cablegram to the Kremlin, to demonstrate, to picket. Yet how many of us have done even those things? We are a large share of the consumers of art and culture. In New York we may be an actual majority, week in and week out, of those who go to the theater, opera, symphony, ballet. Not many months ago in New York, connoisseurs assembling in Carnegie Hall to see a troupe of Soviet folk dancers brushed by a picket line that was pleading with them to boycott the performance in reproof of the Soviet government's Jewish policy. Art—specifically, the art of the Siberian dancers of Omsk—was greater than political passion, those elevated souls were saying by

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their deeds; and people like us must strive to bridge, not widen, division. They would not have bought tickets to the performance of a troupe sent by the South African government, or brushed righteously by pickets distributing leaflets against apartheid. I have heard that at a major American university, after a visit by South Africans had been cancelled, one by a Soviet troupe was well-attended, despite picketing. Thus did the university community show its disapproval of the excessively-Jewish protesters' insensitivity to art and international understanding. Jews are a large share of the culture consumers in universities, too.

But if we are a sorry lot, we are a bit less of a sorry lot than we used to be. That may be because of the example of Israel, or of the Soviet Jews, or of American blacks. It may be because America has changed for the better since the days when it was Hitler who was the Jews' enemy. And it may be because we do not wish to be as we were then, or had to be. Whatever the reasons, we are now less fearful, less inclined to self-censorship, in defense of Jews.

Thirty years ago we insisted we opposed the Nazis because we were Americans and democrats. We had little choice. Lindbergh was only the most prominent of those who accused us of enticing America, for narrow Jewish interests, into a war that was none of her business. Today an occasional editorial revives that line—though with anti-Jewish language rather less blunt, and with Russia substituting for Germany as the country with which America (and all the West) must learn to live at peace: why should the Jews be allowed to jeopardize a détente so necessary to all? The revival of Lindbergh coincides with the revival of the Jewish-warmonger line. (Their coinciding, of course, is no more than a coincidence.)

So far, we have been able to persist. We say we will stop when the Soviet Union stops. Let it stop persecuting the Soviet Jews. Let it stop forbidding them to do what they need and want to do in order to be Jews. The Soviet Union must do its part for détente, and this includes Jewish freedom for the Soviet Jews.

But the pressures against selfish Jewish protests about the Soviet Union are likely to mount. Everyone is talking of a new coalition in American politics. A new America First movement may be that coalition, with room for Old Right and Old Left, New Left and New Right; and maybe also for a few Jews, as in the old America First. The new America First is likely to resemble the old in uniting upper-class and "responsible" types—more of them than we like to remember—with the slopebrows and the rancorous we remember so well. Lindbergh was pro-German. The second-generation Lindberghs will be anti-anti-Russian.

THE Jewish Defense League is often thought of as the purest, most unremitting expression of American-Jewish devotion to Soviet Jewry. That is a mistake. JDL was a latecomer. It owes its celebrity, and consequently much of any importance it may have, to the press and TV—especially TV. In part this is for technical reasons: JDL knows how to do and say "newsworthy" things. But in part, also, the press and TV like JDL, they need JDL.

Before Vice President Agnew began to say what he has said, a liberal academic had said something not very different. In 1968 Eric Goldman wrote, in his *Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson*:

> . . . in the 1960's . . . in the upper-income city neighborhoods and particularly in the suburbs, a new and influential type was emerging, the Metroamerican . . . youthful, educated, affluent, more likely to have some minority blood in his veins. . . . He had ideals. . . . He was liberal. . . .
>
> Metroamericans were . . . especially important . . . because of their dominance in the world of books, magazines, radio and television.

(Today "minorities" apparently do not include the Jews, but in those far-off days of 1968 we knew what was meant by "minority blood." Even the Catholics were a minority then: Goldman says that in the eyes of the Metroamericans, John F. Kennedy "was a minority boy who made it to the White House.")

For years now liberals and radicals, especially if of Jewish parentage, have been telling themselves and us that American Jews have turned selfishly conservative, or actually reactionary. I can testify to this personally, because I have repeatedly* found it necessary to show how wrong this is, as by citing the latest voting data. (In November 1970 the Jews were still voting more liberal than any comparable group, and still giving more liberal answers to the opinion pollsters. See the American Jewish Committee Research Report [December 1970] by my colleagues Amy Malzberg and Geraldine Rosenfield, "America Votes, 1970.") For the press and TV, therefore, JDL could not be more opportune. The dull statistician may tell us the Jews are still disproportionately liberal, but here is JDL saying out loud what the Jews *really* think, showing them up for what they *really* are—as hard-hat as the rest of hard-hat America.

It is because of the violent and extremist impression of the Jews which JDL wants to give, and others want to receive, that the established Jewish community organizations have felt obliged to insist that JDL is unrepresentative, and damaging. Is it not clear that the further decay of restraint and the further growth of what has been

* COMMENTARY, December 1960, May 1961, January 1963, January 1965, July 1965, April 1967, March 1969, January 1970.

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termed the cult of utterness will be worse for the Jews than for almost anyone else? And when JDL acts most distinctively JDL-ishly, it does not help the Russian Jews, either.

JDL is said not only to be the voice of a besieged and resentful lower-middle class, but also to be Orthodox. If Orthodox means what is not conventionally liberal or enlightened, then JDL is Orthodox. (Meir Kahane is an Orthodox rabbi.) But its Orthodoxy is of a special sort—one is tempted to say, a folk Orthodoxy. JDL does not look to Rabbi Joseph Soloveichik, or the decisors, or *rashe yeshivot,* or any of the Hasidic leaders and movements, or Breuer-Frankfurt, or even Mizrachi—no need to mention Agudath Israel, and *a fortiori* the quietist or actually anti-Israel sectaries. The derivation is from Vladimir Jabotinsky; and his attitude toward Orthodoxy, or more generally toward Jewish tradition, had some resemblance to Charles Maurras's attitude toward Catholicism. Maurras was not much of a believer, but as a nationalist he was for French tradition, and that included Catholicism. Maurras attracted many Catholics, and Jabotinsky attracted some of the Jewish Orthodox. If I am not mistaken, a generation ago in Poland young Jews who had abandoned the political quietism in which they had been brought up but who refused to break with Orthodoxy were apt to join Jabotinsky's party in Zionism; and in Palestine—as it then was—apt to join the Irgun Tseva'i Le'ummi instead of the Haganah. (Such rather un-Orthodox Jews as Ben Hecht, in this country, could support the Irgun, too.) When Rabbi Kahane was a boy he belonged to Betar, the Jabotinskyite youth movement.

Though most Jews are not for JDL, some defend it—not for what it is in itself but as a stick to beat the Jewish Establishment with. Of these, in turn, some dislike the Jewish Establishment because it is too much an Establishment, and some because it is too little Jewish. But that can be a distinction more logical than actual, and the one dislike may shade into the other. Thus the published accusation by "a young Jewish radical": "The Jewish Establishment is so busy serving other people's causes that it neglects the cause of its own people." If he actually is a Jewish radical, he is probably alleging that the Jewish section of the bourgeoisie, insecure and vulnerable, curries favor with its superiors in the bourgeois ruling class by doing their dirty work, oppressing the non-Jewish and Jewish masses alike.

But suppose that the young man is less a Jewish radical than a radical Jew. Then his accusation can mean something different, and can have a thoroughly familiar Jewish ring. Song of Songs 1:6 reads: ". . . .they set me to tending the vineyards, *but my own vineyard I have not tended.*" The Targum renders:

> Said the Assembly of Israel to the peoples: ". . . they taught me to worship your follies and to follow in your ways; but the Master of the Universe, who is *my* God, I have not worshipped, and in His ways I have not followed, and His commands and His Torah I have not kept."

For Yalqût Shim'oni, "tending the vineyards" means "honoring the [alien] nations"; and " 'my vineyard'—that is the Holy One blessed be He."

According to the modern development of the old midrash, we are so busy serving other people's causes that we neglect the cause of our own people; or, the Jewish Establishment is so busy serving other people's causes that it neglects the cause of its own people.

IN A congregational bulletin the Orthodox rabbi of my community has written:

> Permit me to present the hapless figure of Avraham Hershkovitz. He was apprehended boarding an airliner with weapons in his possession. The accusation against him was that he was planning to hijack an Arab airship. In the end, the charge against him was for falsifying a passport application.
>
> Mr. Hershkovitz was held in $50,000 bail . . . no Jewish group . . . was willing to come forward to raise bail for him. One lone Jewish individual refused to let Hershkovitz spend Pesach in jail and he came forward with the necessary funds. . . .
>
> I do not write to defend the plans and machinations of Mr. Avraham Hershkovitz, but why is a party for the Berrigans kosher and one for Hershkovitz *trepha*?
>
> Now that Hershkovitz has been . . . sentenced to five years for falsifying a passport application, where are the voices to cry out . . . that the sentence may possibly be harsh with respect to the actual deed?

(Passover is when the Song of Songs is read in the synagogue.)

What the Orthodox rabbi and the radical Jew, and many in between, have in common is shame and anger that ". . . my own vineyard I have not tended." The accompanying resolve is "never again!"

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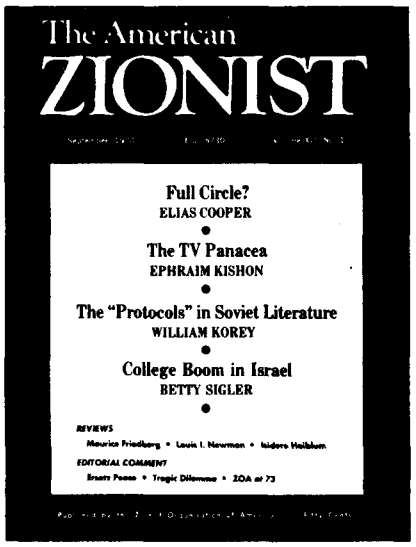
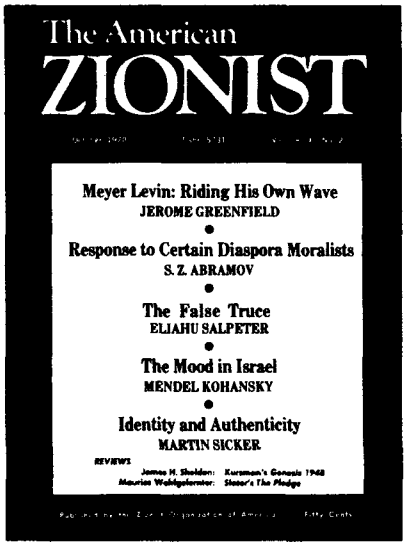
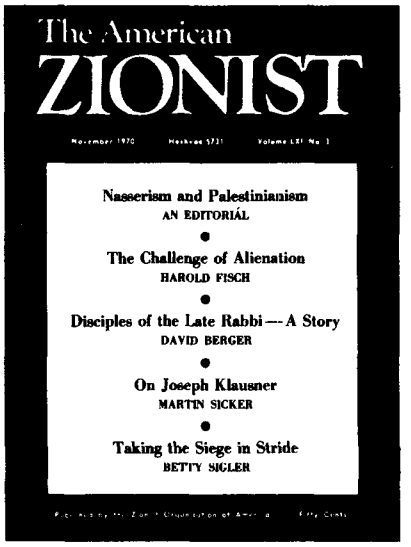
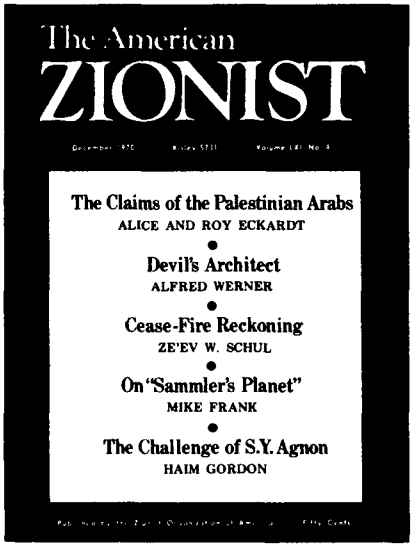
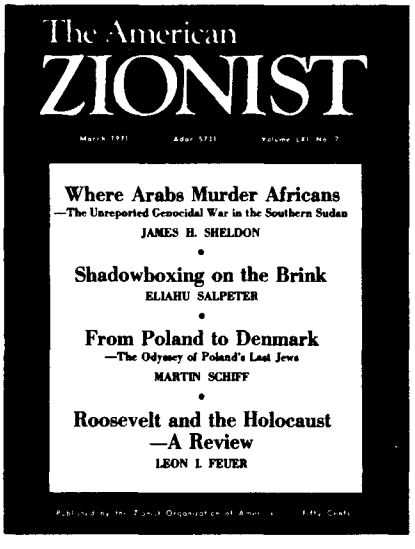
Is All This Worth $4 a Year?

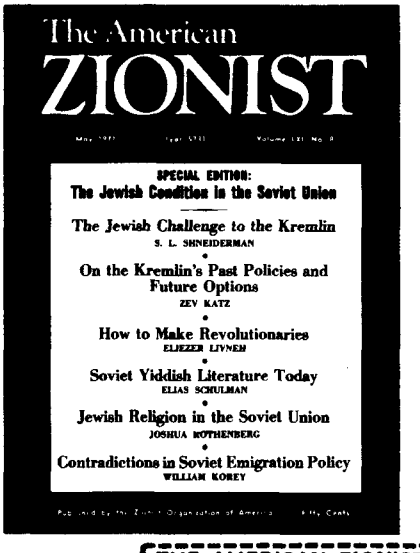


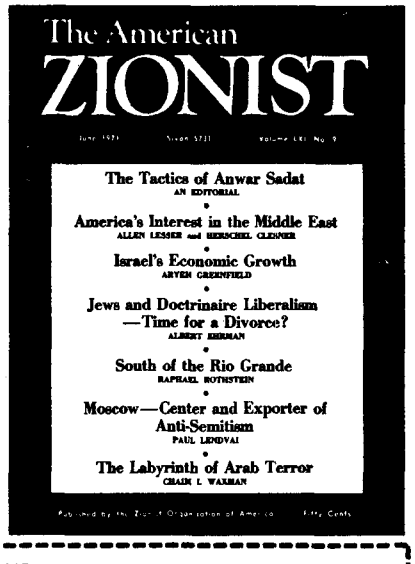












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David Bromwich

I

Writing in 1944, from his perch atop the indomitable sway of the New Criticism and with a view of all its shining academic minions receding into the distance, Mr. Allen Tate, in a short prefatory note to *Land of Unlikeliness*, announced that "there is no other poetry today quite like this." And he was right. Over the last two decades and a half, Robert Lowell has continued to be a poet more influential than influenced, and that by itself would be a considerable mark of his force and integrity. For the moment, it seems pretty generally agreed that he is the greatest of living American poets, although there is equally general doubt as to the nature of his achievement—its contour, if you want. Also, as a fact of nature running alongside the fuss, tremendous quantities of paper are getting filled with articles about Lowell—the present effort makes its small contribution to the pile—and, as always, the criticism is entertaining not only for what it solves but for the quaint blind alleys it finds out and disguises as Main Streets. But Lowell is himself a child of the New Criticism, having composed his earliest poems for the approval of Tate *et al.*, and what is now going on, the celebratory gutting of his work, shouldn't cause him much worry. He is prepared for it, and so are the poems.

Lowell's early work is distinguished by its straining after formal precision, which was understood to mean the same thing as compression. The result was a willful construction of ambiguities which were really more like obliquities, so that the devastation wrought by bombing turned into "thunderbolts fast as light/ Blitzed a wake of shrouds." Here, an influence not often recognized is William Empson, in his poetry as well as criticism. Lowell speaks somewhere of having read *Seven Types of Ambiguity* while writing verse that became more and more difficult; and I imagine that Lowell, like Empson, gets a particular thrill in looking back on his recondite gadgets. The obsession in *Land of Unlikeliness* (and a bit less in *Lord Weary's Castle*) is with Catholicism, or rather Puritanism in Catholic dress. When the poet addresses the Virgin Mary his mind is most likely on Original Sin, and a poem like "Children of Light," which appears in both books, lies at the center of his religious subject: "Pilgrims unhouseled by Geneva's night,/ You planted here the Serpent's seeds of light . . ./And light is where the ancient blood of Cain/ Is burning, burning the unburied grain." The verbal effects of *Land of Unlikeliness* are wrenching—there is so much violence, and so little feeling about what the violence means. Yet in spite of this, one discovers an original voice and a charm the like of which have not been seen before or since.

When the ruined farmer knocked
out Abel's brains,
Our Father laid great cities on
his soul,
A monolithic mole
To bury man and yet to praise
him. Cain's
Life-blood shall drown the ser-
pent in his Hole.

Perhaps charm is the wrong word. The quotation is from a poem called "Leviathan," which goes on with a terrible ironic blast, "Great Commonwealth, roll onward, roll/ On blood," and establishes an early point of contact with Lowell's distinctive malice toward the state.

R. P. Blackmur, in a rather stern review, pointed out that the secular-religious opposition in *Land of Unlikeliness* produced "not a tension but a gritting." In *Lord Weary's Castle* (1946) this problem has been largely solved; the religious sentiment has been given a purpose, put to satirical ends. "As a Plane Tree by the Water" and "Where the Rainbow Ends" are perfections of gritting into tension, but as the law of satire demands, the outcast contemplating a scene where "disgrace/ Elbows about our windows in this planned/ Babel of Boston" must himself look a little odd. What are *you* doing here, my son? For the poet who is moral before he is religious—and Lowell belongs to this group—the sense of an unwilling involvement with society, of Babylon making its final claim despite everything, never quite disappears. That is why Lowell could not be the successor of Eliot; above all else he is never, I think, pious.

The elegy for Warren Winslow, "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket," is the undoubted masterpiece of this period, soaring in that rare, bleak New World altitude which is completely metaphysical and completely of this earth. The somber authority of the poem does not slacken along the way, nor does it grow weaker with time. As with certain other great poems, one feels that the elegy had to be, that the poem wrote itself, so far from being the work of a perfectly separate, personal consciousness. Yet to say this may be misleading for it is, at the same time, such an overwhelmingly *written* poem. The narrative voice here is equal to, even as it is possessed by, the Melville on

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whose spirit it meditates, and the opening lines are permanently fixed in our memory: "A brackish reach of shoal off Madaket,—/ The sea was still breaking violently and night/ Had steamed into our North Atlantic Fleet." Taken as a whole, *Lord Weary's Castle* communicates a full and individual power, without yet coming up to (nothing could be up to) the acclaim that greeted it.

In an essay published at the time, and easily the most intelligent piece ever written about Lowell, Marius Bewley wondered why "from the first the most distinguished American critics appeared to enter a conspiracy for the purpose of establishing [his] literary reputation on as sound a base in as short a time as possible," and went on to note (what is plain to anyone with the least sensitivity to sound, though consistently ignored by critics) "a peculiar kind of ugliness that runs through much of his verse." Examples meet one on every page, and I will be happy to give my own: "Crucifix,/ How can your whited spindling arms transfix/ Mammon's unbridled industry, the lurch/ For forms to harness Heraclitus' stream!"—and this from a poem that starts off very neatly, in the author's best vein, "Ten thousand Fords are idle here in search/ Of a tradition." The ugliness, it seems, is partly but not entirely a symptom of compression, and it has reappeared most flagrantly in *Notebook*.

The Mills of the Kavanaughs, which came (in 1951) five years after *Lord Weary's Castle*, has been treated as something of an embarrassment. People want a poet to develop, and instead Lowell went on writing good poems in the same style; the verdict has a complacent sound about it, but I, for one, do not wish to dissent. "Falling Asleep Over the Aeneid" is the first true historical excursion for Lowell, and a poem amazing in concept and execution, marked for anthologies the day it was born; "The Mills of the Kavanaughs" is a narrative, makes dull reading, and is what is called a "useful failure." Lowell does not have a gift for recording speech, and it is no accident that he should choose dramatic subjects that lend themselves to a high degree of stylization: *Benito Cereno* with its black-on-white, *Prometheus Bound*, the most abstract of Greek dramas.

Life Studies (1959) breaks into the light of common day, and it is by all odds a change for the good. Certainly, no other book in the last twenty years has had such a pure and profound influence on American poetry; much of the impact has by now been absorbed, but it is still directly, all too directly visible in the work of a good many female poets. In *Life Studies*, Lowell writes the political poem ("Inauguration Day: January 1953") he was toying with all through *Land of Unlikeliness*, also the poem in which compression finally is precision. The man who wrote "In Salem seasick spindrift drifts or skips" is now beginning to come through with "'I won't go with you. I want to stay with Grandpa.'"

Lowell is extremely self-conscious in the use of enjambment, and in "Skunk Hour," a beautifully simple and opaque poem, he shows himself at his most cunning.

Nautilus Island's hermit
heiress still lives through winter
in her Spartan cottage;
her sheep still graze above the
sea.
Her son's a bishop. Her farmer
is first selectman in our village;
she's in her dotage.

Reading those first two lines, dropping down past the end-stop as though an elevator were starting, we feel that Ezra Pound has after all done some good in the world if he made this possible. The "loosening" process so often referred to as the chief development in *Life Studies* is nothing other than the discovery of natural tension. As to the "confessional style," I think it is a red herring, even if the term has not been used pejoratively. Style of this kind cannot be packaged, or when it is (as Anne Sexton's verse shows) it will be vitiated by sentimentality. *Life Studies* was Robert Lowell writing like himself, and such an example could only be encouraging: that is the meaning of its influence on other, different minds. The merits of the book—but, as Stevens says, merit in a poet is as boring as merit in a person. These poems will go on being read because they are delightful, and full of wonder and awe.

Two distinct claims are made for Lowell as a translator, and though it would be nice to have them separated out there is yet no clear way of doing this; then, too, Lowell has not done his most to clarify the matter. On the one hand, the reader of *Imitations* (1961) has been asked to consider it a book of original poems in English which happen to be derived from foreign sources. He is then asked to consider the possibility that the imitator, by his very informality in the treatment of sources, has more nearly than before duplicated the "spirit" of the original while eluding its sense. Baudelaire and Rilke are the poets who move Lowell to eloquence, and so it is natural to put a high value on his renditions of them. Yet whoever inclines thus to the second view must account for phrases like "playing tag in your bra" cropping up in Pasternak, along with the psychoanalyzed Homer comprehending "the mania of Achilles." The original of this last, "the wrath of Achilles," is familiar enough for the change to be recognized generally, and questions as to the method itself are bound to follow. The virtues of this book, like those of any other, will not disappear under attack. And even aside from the major work, the Baudelaire and so forth, *Imitations* has its surprising excellences such as the death-march of Annensky's "Black Spring."

THE elemental and yet fine-cut presence of *Benito Cereno* (and in their kind the other two plays in *The Old Glory*, 1965) is so haunting, such a definitive triumph, that one hardly knows where to begin, although it may be allowed without question that there has never been an American drama quite like this. It is first of all a *native* play—as Melville's is a native book—and therefore concerned and appalled with the problem of national destiny. The plot is absolutely spare: a Yankee

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sea captain comes aboard a slave ship whose master is being held captive by rebellious slaves, and a charade is played out before the captain whereby the slaves go on with business as usual, pretending to obey the master; the captain understands at last the true state of affairs and shoots the leader of the slaves. But a summary cannot help very much, for as those people know who have read or seen the play, a great deal of its power comes out of the ritual—its sense of the frozen moment. For example, the incantation of Babu, the slave leader, picking up a crown, a rattan cane, a silver ball, and then smashing the ball: "This is my crown./ This is my rod./ This is the earth./ This is the arm of the angry God." The whole play is a white, engulfing haze clearing away to reveal blackness and a sudden act of violence.

PERKINS

I see a speck on the blue sea, Sir, our whaleboat is coming.

DELANO

A speck? My eyes are speckled.
I seem to have been dreaming.
What's solid?
This ship is nothing, Perkins!
I dreamed someone was trying to kill me!

Lowell had the arrogance to make over the last line of *Prometheus Bound* from "you see me, how I suffer, how unjustly" to "look, you will see us suffer"; readers will decide for themselves whether the conclusion of *Benito Cereno*, with Captain Delano saying as he shoots, "This is your future," may be a like overcharging for effect. Myself, I do not think it is.

THE last two volumes, *For the Union Dead* (1964) and *Near the Ocean* (1967), contain a number of individual successes: "The Mouth of the Hudson," "Middle Age," "Fall 1961," "Child's Song," "Alfred Corning Clark," the poems about Edwards and Hawthorne, and above all "For the Union Dead" represent what is lasting in the earlier book. The title poem, a meditation on the Civil War, the heroic Colonel Shaw, and modern Boston, shows Lowell at the height of his powers, writing in a free verse that has never been so utterly controlled. One does not want to speak about poetry achieved at this level; it is to be read, and learned. Yet in poems like "Myopia: a Night," "Eye and Tooth," and (which is the best of the group) "Night Sweat," something very odd is happening. The poet has taken the dreariness of his early Boston poems and relocated it inside himself, going after every seedy detail with a vengeance; the cancerous feeling is under supervision here, but through *Near the Ocean* and *Notebook* it grows steadily less manageable.*

There is a little too much calculation in the "walls tattooed with neon light,/ then high delirious squalor, food/ burned down with vodka . . . menstrual blood/ caking the covers, when they woke/ to the dry, childless Sunday walk" so neatly catalogued in "Near the Ocean," to be resolved with "Monster loved for what you are,/ till time, that buries us, lay bare." Lowell is always saying terrible things and then telling you how much he loves the monster. "Waking Early Sunday Morning" has become a famous poem already, but I must say that I am constitutionally unable to read its famous lines about the earth, "this sweet volcanic cone," without thinking of ice cream; it is a queer effect, no doubt indicating the proximity of the hackneyed and the sublime. Yet over all, the title sequence of *Near the Ocean* must look impressive, and Lowell's "Vanity of Human Wishes" is brilliant in a tone quite removed from that of the earlier version by Samuel Johnson. One regrettable feature of the book is its mannered illustrations by Sidney Nolan, whose depiction of Theodore Roethke impaled on a ship's anchor over the caption "she made you nonexistent,/ the ocean's anchor, our high tide," sends a chill down my spine.

II

SUCH, then, is the poetic *oeuvre* of Robert Lowell, as it appeared to the critics who wrote about him in 1969-70. Thematic criticism of an author is usually more fun to read than its plodding chronological brother, but it is also rather more tendentious—especially so in the case of Lowell, whose subject matter has seemed to change along with his style. Messrs. Cooper and Fein† are in any case agreed that they had better be plodders and right than staggeringly ingenious and wrong; or they seem to be agreed.

Mr. Cooper will not find satisfaction in a book-by-book survey—indeed, he uses the chronological method only as an excuse. He is out for bigger game. He wants to prove something about an "autobiographical myth," and after dragging myself through his entire book, so deceptively short in pages, I still do not know what he wanted to show or what the myth is. On one level he seems to be suggesting nothing more than that Lowell has been writing about himself—his family, friends, God, conscience—all along, which is hardly a secret. Every writer does this, in one way or another. Mr. Cooper discovers that certain images are repeated in Lowell's work, pointing out, for example, that "burning the unburied grain" which appears in "Children of Light" recurs in "The Mouth of the Hudson," with "A Negro toasts/ wheat-seeds over the coke fumes/ of a punctured barrel." This sounds fine, it is just what a critic is supposed to do, only it has such an air of lifting the veil! "[N]ow the Redman is black. But more than a Negro has been added to the landscape: 'he' [a second figure in the poem] is Lowell him-

* For all that I know, this may be what Robert Bly had in mind when, in the course of a nutty attack on Lowell as a New York intellectual, he seemed to get one shot on target: "He is pretending to have poetic excitement when all he has to offer is nervous excitement." *Robert Lowell: A Portrait of the Artist in His Time*, edited by Michael London and Robert Boyers; David Lewis, 1970 (340 pp., $15.00) reprints the Bly article, along with those of Blackmur and, in part, Bewley. Other points of interest in this very expensive book will be found in the essays by John Bayley, Louis Simpson, Geoffrey Hartman, Randall Jarrell, and John Wain.

† *The Autobiographical Myth of Robert Lowell*, by Philip Cooper, University of North Carolina Press, 170 pp., $7.50; *Robert Lowell*, by Richard J. Fein, Twayne, 173 pp., $4.50.

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self. At a reading of 'The Mouth of the Hudson,' on April 22, 1968, Mr. Lowell confirmed this identification. . . ."

And Mr. Cooper does imagine that he is working on another level as well. A number of times he interrupts his study to quote Lowell to the effect that "all your poems are in a sense one poem," as though to reassure himself that this must justify whatever he happens to be doing at the moment. I don't see the point of what Lowell is saying, by the way, although God knows it's less important to him than it is to Mr. Cooper. My own reaction would be, yes, anything, *in a sense*. As to Lowell, his collected poems will hang together about as well as those of most poets; it is not an essential unity, on the order of Stevens, who wanted to call his collected poems *The Whole of Harmonium*. But Mr. Cooper takes heart from this remark, whatever it may mean, and quotes tirelessly from poetry readings and from a letter written him by the poet: Lowell does a lot of confirming.

Mr. Cooper deserves credit, anyhow, for having found a statement by Lowell that in effect legitimates any critical tactic, however irrelvant or atrocious. "What I didn't intend often seems now at least as valid as what I did." From that, too, Mr. Cooper takes heart, and his book is full of things Lowell could not in the remotest possibility have intended. Notice how the wonderfully specific atmosphere of "The Mouth of the Hudson" gets swamped in Universality:

> The antithetical movement between the implicit expectations of a "bird-watcher" and the abominable Avernus this one watches, between the isolated man and his ambivalent integration into the landscape, makes a figure of all process and one that is elaborated by the details of the rest of the poem—and of the poet's work. The pepper and salt snow in line two, for example, has not only a prosy accuracy as a description of snow in New York, but also a similarity to "The piles/of earth and lime,/ a black pile and a white pile," that make a day-night, summer-winter, life and death, Yin and Yang iterative image. . . .

Yin and Yang? Help! The prose styles of Carl Jung and Susan Sontag—both of whom he cites, and puts to questionable use—have not helped Mr. Cooper to write any better. When I read the first pages of his book, which traces images back from Lowell to Milton and *King Lear*, and are half taken up by footnotes, I feared the worst. My fear has not been disappointed; the willfully erratic mind here on display was in orbit long before it could think to glance down at its feet.

By contrast, the stolid good sense exhibited by Mr. Fein is bound to come as a relief. Where Mr. Cooper has an index complete with Arnold Toynbee and seems always on the verge of saying "the literal essence of the profound significance," Mr. Fein's sober references are to Thoreau and de Tocqueville, and his only fault is writing too many sentences that begin "to the extent that." About Mr. Fein, one feels that his true element is the classroom, and other teachers in particular should find his treatment competent and suggestive.

III

Now Mr. Cooper's notion about the "autobiographical myth" was obviously leading somewhere, and on reaching the end of his volume one is hardly surprised to find that "the *Notebook* is a totally occasional poem. But everything, [Lowell's] whole life work, rides on it." The book appeared rather too late to get its proper share of analysis from Mr. Fein, although without a special argument to pamper he does at any rate manage to stay clear of this sort of nonsense. Mr. Cooper came armed with a Thesis (however convoluted in statement) and quite predictably the recoil deprived him of his reason.

And yet *Notebook** marks a point of departure for this poet—the declaration of a new form, therefore a new content—just as significant as the earlier shift in *Life Studies*; and here Mr. Cooper might have been onto something if he weren't so hopelessly distracted hunting down Jung and turtle archetypes. The difference, of course, is that *Notebook* is not likely to affect the mainstream of poetry, because the style it invents is bad—really, because it is not in any accepted sense a style, but rather the flow of an unremittingly turbid subconscious. What Dr. Johnson observed of Gray may truly be said of Lowell in his *Notebook*, that "he was dull in a new way, and that made many people think him GREAT." The poems do not as a rule work individually, and so one is proud at having found the patience to wait for a cumulative impression. Still, being in every sense a difficult "case," it is a book that has to be read; and from a certain point of view, regarded as a necessarily unsorted testament delivered up from purgatory, it is probably defensible.

IT IS not opening eyes to propose now, fifty years after *The Waste Land*, that modern poetry is highly allusive. Yet our awareness extends chiefly to that quality insofar as it has reference to literature, while modern poetry is also, and to an extraordinary degree, *privately* allusive. If you want to learn more about *The Waste Land* you can always look up *The Spanish Tragedy*. But the private reference is something else again: there aren't any notes, and only the poet knows his way around the library. A contemporary poet of unquestionable talent has gone on record as favoring one of his poems over all the rest because it contained the largest number of private jokes; and the particular case must appear trivial compared with the tendency. Rare is the poet who can be as fully comprehended in the reading, without help, as in a public "reading" with its explanations and asides by the author. So, in a way, Lowell has simply drawn this tendency out to its logical end. Resorting to various coded privacies, *Notebook* lies partly submerged, like an iceberg, and its "unrealistic" imagery (the term belongs to Lowell) proceeds by a law of association unknown and unknowable to the reader.

Before entering on a further criticism of the book, it may be well to look at a poem that suc-

*Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 265 pp., $7.50.

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ceeds on its own. My choice would be "The March":

Under the too white marmoreal
Lincoln Memorial,
the too tall marmoreal Washington Obelisk,
gazing into the too long reflecting pool,
the reddish trees, the withering autumn sky,
the remorseless, amplified harangues for peace—
lovely to lock arms, to march absurdly locked
(unlocking to keep my wet glasses from slipping)
to see the cigarette match quaking in my fingers,
then to step off like green Union Army recruits
for the first Bull Run, sped by photographers,
the notables, the girls . . . fear, glory, chaos, rout . . .
our green army staggered out on the miles-long green fields,
met by the other army, the Martian, the ape, the hero,
his new-fangled rifle, his green new steel helmet.

After suffering under the strange antics of the other army, the poet offers his bewildered and euphoric toast to the heroes: "Health to those who held,/ health to the green steel head . . . to your kind hands/ that helped me stagger to my feet, and flee."

What is it that makes all this so attractive? The comical details —the "match quaking in my fingers," the wet glasses—contract the space between author and reader, creating a wonderful sense of nearness; "sped by photographers," with its suggestion of film racing to record the event, is especially clever. Glancing off "For the Union Dead," the echoes of the Civil War sound perfectly balanced and are available to any reader. Most of all, however, the excellence of the poem is in its *persona*: the poet, man of his age, ironic and committed and a bit frightened—this is recognizably the author who wrote: "These are the tranquillizd *Fifties*,/ and I am forty. Ought I to regret my seedtime?/ I was a fire-breathing Catholic C.O. . . ." And just this kind of presence is missing in *Notebook* as a whole.

In its place there is offered no end of excruciating poses struck by the artist as worn-out neurotic, and the unfortunate point about this is that the poetry hardly ever rises above the squalid world-pain it sets out to relieve. With lines like

My heart bleeds for the black monster.
I have seen the Gorgon.
The erotic terror
of her helpless, big bosomed body lay like slop.

("Florence")

and with his thunderously indelicate version of *Phaedra*, Lowell once earned consideration as the natural, psychoanalytic heir of Elizabethan violence. Well, but does anyone much want that? If you do not, please beware of *Notebook*, where the author turns out to be more than usually generous with his own peculiar make of gross sexual rhetoric—for example, on the women of George Grosz: "if one could swing the old sow by her tits:/ the receding hairline of her nettled cunt/ severed like the scalplock by the stroke of a brush." Occasionally a good image working out of the unrealistic technique—"the broken clamshell labeled man"—will eventuate in something awful, and "the clamshell cunted in the ground of being," though capable of paraphrase, is surely beyond redemption. Of the sub-genre known as neurotic poetry Lowell has produced one acknowledged masterpiece, "Skunk Hour"; but he has been lost in the soup ever since. Sometimes he can be very strange and beautiful, as a faithful spirit keeping pulse on the urban blues:

Nothing more established, pure and lonely,
than the early Sunday morning in New York—
the sun on high burning, and most cars dead.

("Alba")

Depressing materials went to make those lines, and yet their feeling is one of exhilaration. One would only wish for more of this—for a little more respite from sorrow, which unalloyed (and unallayed) cannot help turning tepid, so that the poetry gets contaminated by what it describes.

Much of the book does not fall under that shadow. Much of it is simply chatter, though often of a literary sort; and a certain interest attaches to the observations quoted from other poets—Ransom, Frost, Pound, Bishop, Jarrell, Eliot—and thereby passed over from chance remark into Immortal Quip. Allen Tate called Lowell's daughter "a Southern belle": you want to remember that. In effect, the interest taken in such poetry becomes a cover for something else, bearing on voyeurism. The poet is not altogether serious when, after twelve lines of Eliot running on about his relatives ("I've just found two of mine reviewed by Poe./ He wiped the floor with them . . . and I was *delighted*."), he throws up his hands and says "Ah Tom, one muse, one music, had one the luck—/ lost in the dark night of the brilliant talkers,/ humor and honor from the everlasting dross!" Which is horribly predictable even while it looks tacked on. To show what can happen when the Boswellian impulse gets mixed in with more important things, let me quote a poem entitled "Munich 1938," written after the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Hitler, Mussolini, Daladier, Chamberlain:
that historic confrontation of the great—
firm on one thing, they were against the war;
each won there, by shoving the war ahead twelve months.
Is it worse to choke on the vomit of cowardice,
or blow the world up on a point of honor? . . .
John Crowe Ransom at Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio,
looking at primitive African art on loan:
gleam-bottomed naked warriors of oiled brown wood,
makeshift tin straws in their hands for spears;
far from the bearded, armored, all-profile hoplites
on the Greek vase; not distant maybe from their gods—
John saying, "Well, they may not have been good neighbors,
but they never troubled the rest of the world."

August 22, 1968

What is Ransom doing with that African art? Why, exactly, does Prague put the author in mind of Munich? How does "Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio" shed light

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on the 1938 betrayal and the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia? Such are the niggling questions a reader may feel obliged to ask, while reflecting that "to choke on the vomit of cowardice" is so poor one cannot quite believe it is Robert Lowell. The three items are being held in juxtaposition, and that's the end of it. Perhaps the hoplites and Russians are deadly with civilization, as against the defenseless Africans and Czechs. Perhaps not; and it's no more than a finger exercise—who cares?

On political subjects Lowell does not always seem thus unaccountably baffled, and I rather like the poem about Stalin, which concludes:

Stalin? What shot him clawing up
the tree of power—
millions plowed under like the
crops they grew,
his intimates dying like the
spider-bridegroom?
The large stomach could only
chew success. What raised him
was the usual lust to break the
icon,
joke cruelly, seriously, and be
himself.

A good illustration, by the way, of Mr. Fein's note about the deliberate staging of confrontations with historical characters. With Colonel Shaw, Napoleon, Stalin, this is always in some degree a process of assimilation, and a part of Lowell himself shows up in the lines quoted above. The sequence of poems called "The Powerful" has to be rated the most ambitious effort in the book; and if not entirely successful, it does anyhow want dipping into more than once, as raw matter issuing from the conscience of a bitterly moral historian.

Altogether, I am of two minds about Lowell's *Notebook*. For one thing, there is so much of it—so much good, bad, or just "typical." No one but Robert Lowell would have the temerity to write "Faust's soul-sale," and that, it may be said, is typical. So is "the mammoth mammaries of Aphrodite," or (describing the speaker at a left-wing demonstration) "the audience understood;/ anticipating the sentence, they too stood/ for the predestined poignance of his murder,/ his Machiavellian Utopia of pure nerve." The only name for this is rhetoric, a personal cadence and diction by now (I should say) easily parodied. The quality of the poetry depends—this is obvious—on where the rhetoric is heading. Taking a step downward, it may become rather stupid ("The Republic! But it never was,/ except in the sky-ether of Plato's thought,/ steam from the ordure of his city state.") or grow astonishingly crude, as when it surveys the corpse of F. O. Matthiessen, "frozen meat." Yet in writing of the death of Randall Jarrell—another suicide, another friend gone by—Lowell suddenly finds the elevation and the evenness of tone which elsewhere in the book he so painfully lacks, and in that single moment he is magnificent:

you plod out stub-
bornly,
as if asleep, Child Randall, as if
in chainstep,
meeting the cars, and approving;
a harsh luminosity,
as you clasp the blank coin at
the foot of the tunnel.

An English critic, confronted with *Notebook* and apparently having trouble with it, decided there must be a trick to reading this sort of work. It is much easier if you close your eyes halfway, get settled in a dreamy stupor, and then wait for the meanings to rise up to the surface. I have to admit the novelty of his solution, and having tried it for myself I know that it delivers the goods. But when I ask if this is the way good poetry can be read, the answer must be no. *Notebook* is a special case, perhaps the only one of its kind, lying somewhere between entries in a personal diary and notes toward the making of a real, fully orchestrated series of poems. And it is not hard to tell when an individual poem lies more squarely in the first category or the second; "The Powerful" is plainly nearer the second.

No one is going to read the new Lowell with delight, and those who make it their one poetry book of the year (surely Lowell has more readers of this kind than any other poet alive) are going to see even less of the iceberg than they should, unless they are well acquainted with the author's friends, influences, and past work. At all events, there ought to be no two ways about the "crowning achievement" business. It is not that. Fairness will prevail if the book is viewed rather as a transitional step, the worth of which must be determined entirely by future productions. There is certainly no reason to lose heart, since Lowell remains a writer in full possession of an imposing wit, and all his wits.

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The Reputation of Eric Rohmer

William S. Pechter

With *Claire's Knee,* one begins to see more clearly precisely what Eric Rohmer was up to in *My Night at Maud's,* and what the morality consists of in his "Six Moral Tales." The setting is different, and the climate, and, to some considerable extent, the cast of characters, but the scheme of the two films is sufficiently the same to enable one to describe the latter film as a variation on the themes of the former. In both, a charming but slightly complacent young man finds himself cast somewhat adrift in a milieu not his own (though, in *Claire's Knee,* it is one he grew up in and moved away from), and faced with a conflict between impulse and his rules of behavior. In both, the heroes resolve the conflict by deferring to their moral codes, and acting, as they see it, virtuously; and both films end on the vague sense that, in their so doing, life has somehow offered them opportunities that they have allowed to slip by.

Like the young man in *My Night at Maud's,* the hero of *Claire's Knee* meets a woman who attracts him while he is committed to another, but here the differences between the films begin to assert themselves. For the man in *Claire's Knee* is actually engaged to be married (we never meet his fiancée, but only see her staring severely from a photograph), while in *My Night at Maud's,* the man is committed not so much to any real girl as to an ideal one as he has imagined her; though, in the course of the film, he sees a girl and decides she embodies his ideal even before he gets to meet her. And the men themselves are different; though both of means, the hero of *My Night at Maud's* is bourgeois and engaged in a profession (he is an engineer), while the hero of *Claire's Knee* is wealthy and idle (we are told he is a diplomat, but see him only at leisure). Moreover, the values they adhere to are different not only in content but in form; the man in *Claire's Knee* lives freely in pursuit of contentment, his ethic of his own improvisation; the man in *My Night at Maud's* is a practicing Catholic.

The setting of *My Night at Maud's* is a small industrial town in provincial France in cold and snowy mid-winter; the hero, recently arrived to begin a new job, is taken by an old friend he has met to visit Maud, an intelligent and beautiful divorcée who receives them within the society of her salon with a kind of lively independence reminiscent of that of the emancipated young women in Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons.* The young man and Maud immediately strike up an intimate rapport. The subject of his Catholicism is discussed, and she teases him playfully on points of ethical philosophy, while he defends himself with an extremely winning awareness of his seemingly "square" inflexibility. A heavy snow falls during the visit, and, though the friend who introduced them is able to return home, the young man is unable to drive to his distant lodgings, and, at his hostess's insistent invitation, he spends the night. They talk; they flirt; but, despite the palpable sense of her accessibility and his attraction to her, "nothing happens." The morning before, at Mass, the man has caught a glimpse of a girl whom he has determined meets all his specifications for a future wife, and at Mass, after his night at Maud's, he sees her again and succeeds in introducing himself to her. And though he later spends another day with Maud, thereafter his course is fixed unswervingly. The film ends with an epilogue in which the man, now married to the girl and a father, chances to meet Maud at the seashore. The reunion is brief and (despite the muted revelation that the lover in the wife's one, previously confessed, premarital affair had been Maud's ex-husband) unemphatic. There is no indication that the man has chosen wrongly, or is unhappy; only a lingering sense of roads not taken.

Claire's Knee is set in a resort area of southern France, a place of lakes and lush greenery to which the principal character has come to sell a house he once lived in. He meets an old friend, this time a woman, who introduces him to the family with which she is staying: a widow (and divorcée) and her adolescent daughter. The friend, a writer, affectionately mocks the man about his imminent marriage, his unsuitability for monogamous fidelity, and his roving eye for the young girls about the area. The adolescent daughter develops an obvious crush on the man, and the friend, aware he is flattered by this, urges him to test his devotion to his fiancée. He takes her dare, but "nothing happens"; though whether through his forbearance or the young girl's reluctance to be toyed with isn't clear; in any case, his attraction to her proves manageable. But when Claire, her step-sister who shows no interest in him, joins them for her school holiday, the man quickly grows infatuated with her; and, still maintaining his state of satisfaction over remaining faithful to his future wife and still under the guise of demonstrating his invulnerability, he embarks on a scheme the end of which is the

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exorcism of such desire as he playfully (and, surely, disingenuously) admits to finding focused on Claire's knee. Claire ignores him, preoccupied with a teen-age boyfriend who the man insists is unworthy of her; he persists, however, and, after having witnessed the boyfriend apparently behaving unfaithfully with another girl, he finally manages to provoke a scene in which, alone with Claire, he tells her of her boyfriend's "infidelity" and reduces her to tears—during which he "consolingly" places his hand on her knee. "Nothing happens"; the man claims to have demonstrated to his friend his unsusceptibility, and to have rescued Claire from an unsuitable match in the bargain, and he returns to his fiancée in Sweden (the friend tells him in parting that she, too, is soon to marry). He is hardly gone before Claire and her boyfriend have settled their quarrel and are reunited, and things are seen to go on much as they were before the man's arrival.

"The heroes of a story are always blindfolded. Otherwise they wouldn't do anything," the writer-friend tells the man early in *Claire's Knee*, and the statement applies equally to the hero of *My Night at Maud's*. But it seems, in *Claire's Knee*, to apply to the friend as well, whose role is actually less like that of the friend's in the earlier film than it is like Maud's. Claire, beyond her sexual allure, remains a blank, and her step-sister, though bright and vivacious, is conveniently gawky, and never a real threat to the man's "virtuous" resolve. But between him and the writer one senses the same warm rapport and, in her teasing, the same affection as between the engineer and Maud. Yet, unlike Maud, she seems no less "blindfolded" than he. Both she and the man interest themselves busily in playfully managing the affairs of the other, but, despite the almost tangible attraction one senses between them (they are continually touching and embracing), neither seems willing to assume the risk (whether of possible rejection or possible commitment) involved in taking a first serious step. When he challenges the morality of her lengthy withdrawal, with which she professes contentment, from love affairs and the company of men, she replies by asking him how can it be immoral when it keeps her chaste. And her reply, as much as his profession of having found some ideal satisfaction in fidelity to his superego-like, Nordic fiancée (toward whom he admits to feeling "friendship" rather than passion) and of having put sexual restlessness behind him, seems "blindfolded," an evasion of natural feeling, a willful closing-off of one's self from risk and unknown possibilities.

GIVEN the needs of the characters in both films to erect barriers between their will and their impulsive feelings, and their need to justify this to themselves and others, it's hardly surprising that they talk incessantly, and that Rohmer's films themselves are chiefly propelled by this talk, by the characters' conversation. What is surprising is how *un*literary the films seem nevertheless to be (as compared, say, with Bergman's, or Godard's). This is, I think, because they consist of not just talk but dramatic talk; the talk of rounded characters, interacting. (Sometimes, in *Claire's Knee*, this sense fails, and of the writer especially one occasionally feels she is acting as the author's mouthpiece.) It would be silly to complain of this talk, with John Simon, that it is not more brilliantly witty or rigorously philosophical. There is no pretense of attempting a *Don Juan in Hell;* Shaw's characters exist, above all, in their self-knowledge and their delight in explaining themselves; Rohmer's characters talk, in great measure, in an attempted skirmish against some confrontation with their impulsive natures. But the great achievement of Rohmer's films is in the sense they convey (*My Night at Maud's*, especially) of the *sensuousness* of talk; of talk situated not only in a particular setting captured with vivid specificity, but situated further in the physical relations of the characters, both as it substitutes for these and as it extends itself (in *Claire's Knee*) into actual physical contact —into touching, and caressing. I say "sensuousness," but there are moments in both films when one might describe the effect of the characters' verbal interplay as verging on eroticism.

What Rohmer's films achieve they achieve with such finesse, with such delicacy and refinement, that it becomes interesting to ask why their achievement isn't greater; why, if so fine, they seem so clearly less than great; why, in fact, they seem so distinctly minor. This is true, I think, already of *My Night at Maud's,* from which *Claire's Knee* seems to me a falling-off.

The differences between the films are partly attributable to the differences between their principal characters (and to the extraordinarily graceful performances of Jean-Louis Trintignant and Françoise Fabian in *My Night at Maud's;* and to the crisp elegance of the earlier film's black-and-white photography by Nestor Almendros, whose color work in *Claire's Knee* is somewhat less distinguished). The men in both may be "blindfolded," but only in the latter film does the principal's blindness owe itself to self-deception; which might not have made the work any less substantial were it not for what one feels to be the more arbitrary values, the less substantial commitment, through which, in *Claire's Knee*, the man's blindness is preserved. (One's sense of his fundamental frivolousness causes his actions in provoking Claire to tears to impress one as rather ugly, a feeling dissipated only by an awareness of how short-lived is his effect.) In *My Night at Maud's*, one feels the hero's values to have weight and solidity, and one is conscious of his Catholicism as both a prop and (to the extent that he *is* genuinely responsive to the attraction of Maud) a burden. But the sense of both films' limitations extends beyond the particularities of their principal characters. Already, in *My Night at Maud's*, one is aware of a work approaching a perfection of control, but also of the staking out of an artistic territory whose embrace is very small. Yet the finely detailed smallness of *My Night at Maud's* in no way dimin-

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ishes the work; if anything, one takes added delight from the fact of its being so meticulously and articulately in command of its special world. In *Claire's Knee,* however, one occasionally feels the garden is a little too cultivated, the landscaping scheme almost too well-regulated. Like its leading character, the film is full of vivacity and charm, and, like him, once gone, it soon fades without leaving a trace.

THE critical and popular success of *My Night at Maud's* and *Claire's Knee* has been such as to make of Eric Rohmer probably the most highly regarded figure to emerge in the French film since the "New Wave" debuts of Truffaut, Chabrol, and Godard; already, in the wake of the reception accorded these two films, the fourth and fifth of Rohmer's "Six Moral Tales," an earlier work in the series, *La Collectionneuse,* has been belatedly made available, and, though reportedly less impressive than the later films (I haven't seen it), it has been generally received a good deal more respectfully than one can assume it might have been without its director's subsequent establishment of a formidable reputation. Rohmer is, in fact, a contemporary of the "New Wave" directors (though slightly older, he made his first film around the time they made theirs), and, like them, has been associated with the magazine, *Cahiers du Cinéma.* What fundamentally distinguishes his work from that of his colleagues, however (at least from that of Godard and the early Truffant), and perhaps accounts for the length of time it has taken for his impact to be felt, is its essential conservatism: its *formal* conservatism. But such has been its recent impact that it may now not be excessive to say, on the basis of his last two films alone, that Rohmer's work represents a conservative force in contemporary filmmaking, much as, say, Hindemith did in 20th-century music, or J. F. Powers does in contemporary American fiction.

In itself, this is entirely to be respected, and I (who admire Powers above most of his contemporaries) do respect it. But the fact of it does, I think, color the reception that Rohmer's work has had in ways about which I feel a good deal less comfortable. Reading the popular press on Rohmer, one frequently has the impression of seeing his work appropriated to laud the return of "civilized" values in the French film on much the same mindless level as *Love Story* is being used to herald the return to "romanticism." Indeed, beyond the covert philistine thrust that one vaguely senses in the reviewers' praise, there is the occasional sense of almost hearing a sigh of relief at being faced with films at once so obviously serious and intelligent and (cf. Godard, etc.) so *non-threatening* in their implied definition of what a film might be. This is, I stress, quite extrinsic to Rohmer's work itself, but it is part of what one might call the sociology of his films, and of legitimate interest. Nor are these the only purposes which Rohmer's work has been found by others conveniently to serve. When film criticism's chief maker of cult reputations (and an ardent advocate of pre-political Godard) describes *Claire's Knee* as "the first great film of 1971," it becomes apparent that there are also anti-philistine schemes afoot. And whether Rohmer's films are great or not, major or minor (and I am well aware that such categories have whatever limited meaning they possess only insofar as they are harnessed to wider argument), the implied idea that any given year can be expected to yield not only one great film but a first among others is one worth resisting. One might say of film criticism what one can of so many things: that one gets the kind one wants; and many, it seems, want not criticism so much as public relations.

I see a great many movies every year, and I rarely see a great one. That I don't no more diminishes my respect for the medium than my failure to read a great new novel each year portends to me the death of the novel. The exaggeration of Rohmer's quite estimable achievement is not in itself a matter of consequence, but it is to be resisted insofar as it encourages us in the delusion that, through the beneficent workings of film distribution, we will be brought within the magical span of each 365 days our just quota of flops and masterpieces. In the boom-or-bust mentality out of which most film criticism is written, 1971 is Rohmer's year, and *Claire's Knee* the first great film of it. In fact, I can't without effort recall the last great new film I have seen. I do know that the best new film I've seen in the recent past is one which hasn't been distributed in the United States, and (if the history of its director's later work gives any indication) isn't likely to be; it is Satyajit Ray's *Days and Nights in the Forest.* Whether Ray's film is good or great, major or minor, I don't really know, and don't much care. I know that, like Rohmer's films, it is a fundamentally conservative work. Unlike them, however, it is one in which a placid surface ultimately becomes a pane of glass through which one glimpses dense and turbulent life beyond.

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The Search for America

THE MANY AMERICAS SHALL BE ONE. By HARRISON E. SALISBURY. *Norton. 204 pp. $6.50.*

OUT OF PLACE IN AMERICA. By PETER SCHRAG. *Random House. 247 pp. $6.95.*

U.S. JOURNAL. By CALVIN TRILLIN. *Dutton. 314 pp. $6.50.*

LISTENING TO AMERICA. By BILL MOYERS. *Harper's Magazine Press. 342 pp. $7.95.*

YAZOO: INTEGRATION IN A DEEP SOUTHERN TOWN. By WILLIE MORRIS. *Harper's Magazine Press. 192 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by WALTER GOODMAN

OFF they go, our journalists, on their endless quest for America. Thousands of them, craftsmen and hacks, a few poets, surprisingly few propagandists, puffed-up TV commentators, moonlighting academics, novelists between novels, newspapermen doing a job, celebrities out to see or be seen. Off they go, with jet tickets and tape recorders, to look and to listen and bring America back to the folks at home.

It's been under way since the beginnings of the nation, this search for America, and our craving shows no signs of abatement. We can't get enough of our big, fascinating, confusing country. So we look to the professionals, the fellows who go everywhere and see everything and talk to everybody; we ask them not merely for facts, but for significance, for *experience*. That we will more often than not be disappointed goes without saying—but there's always another newspaper, another month's magazine, another TV documentary—and another season's books.

The basic journalist, the one on whom we all rely and from whom other journalists borrow incessantly and shamelessly, is the daily newspaperman. Harrison Salisbury is among the most experienced and distinguished practitioners of that craft. In more than twenty years with the New York *Times*, he has reported from everywhere—the American South and the Vietnamese North, the streets of Moscow and the slums of Brooklyn. *The Many Americas Shall Be One* consists mainly of recapitulations of his major stories, which have considerably less impact here than they did on the front page of the *Times*. They are embellished with unexceptionable reflections on how much better things would be if we were all more courteous.

The good newspaperman's prime attributes are energy, persistence, and a healthy desire to see for himself. Writing is rarely his strong point—which does not matter much in a newspaper but becomes noticeable in a book. Salisbury's favorite stylistic strategy is the lecture-platform reminiscence: "I happened to be travelling in Eastern Europe at the time of Little Rock." From which, he is likely to go into a punchy inventory:

> But I have listened to rock music in Ulan Bator and Gangtok. I have played Beatles records on jukeboxes (German-made) in the Persian desert and on Soviet steamers traversing the Sea of Japan. I have studied the texts of decrees in Burma banning long hair and miniskirts; I have read Komsomol speeches delivered in Urals factories, inveighing against long hair and miniskirts. I have seen warnings from the Kuomintang against long hair and miniskirts, and I have seen the same from the Greek colonels. The continents and countries change but not the message.

For reasons suggested by the above passage, one ought not demand of the newspaperman his ideas about the events he covers—though he may insist on advancing them. See your daily newspaper for the once useful reporters who have been promoted to columnist, in which job they must labor several times a week to eke a thought out of their small stock of ideas. The newspaperman moves fast, from event to event, and as often as not will borrow his interpretations from persons who got their information from him in the first place. Here is the Salisbury inventory on ecology:

> You may not see the immediate connection between the young people of Cambridge who have pledged themselves not to use the gasoline combustion engine and the young Zen acolytes begging on Fifth Avenue, between the resolute warrior-lawyers who fight Storm King and the Berrigan brothers, between beautiful girls pledged to bear no more children and the SDS. But I see a close and intimate connection. I see a society searching for basics, a society which has turned not against the substance of its truth but against the forms in which that truth has been containerized, a society which is at the one and the same time seeking and creating a new faith and a new mystique.

Harrison Salisbury is a decent-minded, admittedly old-fashioned gentleman, with quirkily old-fashioned views about respect for the flag. He comes out here for cooperation in preference to conflict, and change in preference to destruction. He has already done his reporting job well enough so that there was no need for him to try to do it again. This book ought not to be held against him.

THE lure of attempting to salvage one's articles from the maw of periodical journalism snares magazine writers more often than newspapermen. (I confess to having been caught once and to being in imminent peril of snapping at the bait again.) It is not difficult for a magazine writer to persuade himself that the scores of pieces he has turned out over the years add up

WALTER GOODMAN's *most recent book is* A Percentage of the Take *(Farrar, Straus & Giroux).*

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to something coherent, constitute a body of work, a statement of a philosophy, an overview of America, or some such thing. The rationale is usually offered in a preface: "It was not until I began to think of them [magazine pieces] as a group that I realized that each was an elaboration of a common theme . . .," Peter Schrag tells us.

Most of Schrag's articles come from the *Saturday Review*, and all the articles in Calvin Trillin's *U.S. Journal* come from the department of that title in the *New Yorker*. They are fair representatives of their home bases—the relentless earnestness of the former, the wry understatement of the latter, except when it is publishing Charles Reich. (Despite major differences of approach, our writers' opinions on most issues are not so far apart. Indeed, taking these five books as a sampling, the Vice President could advance his case that American journalism is in thrall to the radical-libs.)

Out of Place in America leaves me with no doubt that Peter Schrag is an intelligent, thoughtful man with a serious interest in America's schools and other complicated subjects, and he no doubt has something to tell us about them, if only he would allow himself to do so. But he prefers to impose portentous thoughts upon us: his subtitle is *Essays for the End of an Age*. He is a Don Quixote of journalism—perhaps he would feel insulted by being classed as a journalist at all—out in search of the Big Idea. Here are some of the trophies he lugs home:

Of a football game in the South: "It is an eternal celebration of time defied. The clock on the field measures no dimension except ritual itself, no continuity beyond the formal hour of quarters, halves and minutes to go. The clock is a liar. Individuals live in other continuities. . . ."

On Harlem: "The horror derives from the fact that insofar as race defines any set of social problems in America, the action, vitality, and initiative—and hence the freedom—are black. What this means, I think, is that Black Power has not only established itself as an idea, but that it has already begun to turn psychic tables on the whites." (Oh, Norman Mailer, count among your sins what you have done to young magazine writers.)

On schools: "It is because they don't deal in the fundamentals of life at all: birth, death, love, violence, passion; because they don't recognize the brevity of human existence; because, in their passion for fundamentals, they miss the elemental: the tragic, the heroic, the beautiful, the ugly."

The book is crammed with such stuff, and it is a pity because one can discern here and there within the clogged prose sensible observations about blue-collar workers, the people of Appalachia, and other subjects. Schrag insists on carrying every assignment up to a level of abstraction where there is no purchase for the journalist. As he wanders up there, among epochs and eras and civilizations and cultures and ritual and tragedy, everything comes out sounding like Max Lerner. And soon, because it becomes plain that the writer is infatuated with the Big Idea and somewhat impatient with mere facts, he risks losing the reader's trust—at least Schrag lost mine. On a visit to a lower-class white neighborhood, for example, Schrag gives us this description: "Coming out of school in the afternoon the boys already resemble their fathers when the shifts change—rows of dark, tufted mail-order-house jackets, rows of winter hats with the earflaps laced above the head, crossing the road from the plant to the parking lot, from the high school to the waiting buses and bare-wheeled Chevvies." I have watched children come out of school in at least a half-dozen states, as Harrison Salisbury might say, but never have they emerged in a manner so suited to my preconceptions.

Trust is at the heart of the journalist's craft. If he loses that, he loses all—and in my estimation such is the fate of much of the journalism of advocacy that has been having a run in the past few years. An article may surprise us; it may go against our expectations; it may contradict our beliefs. Whether we accept or resist the contradictions will depend in some measure on the degree of trust built up by the writer—his manner, his marshaling of the evidence, his willingness to

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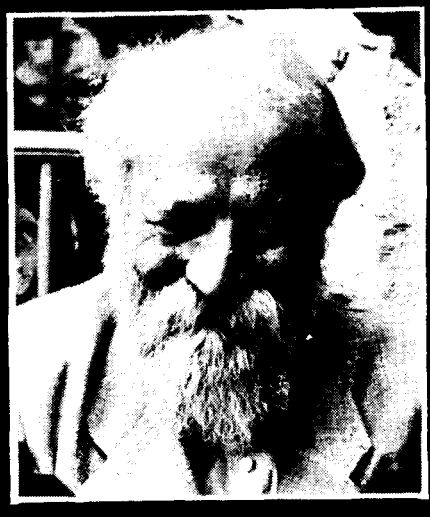
grant a point, to give all the devils their due. If he has no patience for such paraphernalia of reporting, then only brilliance can save him, and brilliance is not as readily generated as Big Ideas.

To COME to Calvin Trillin after Peter Schrag is like watching the fog lift. In addition to being a good writer, Trillin is a professional, no insult intended. Being a professional has its dangers—one may come to rely routinely on techniques that have worked before; one may keep worrying subjects that one stopped caring about several articles ago—but professionalism has its virtues, and these are prominent in *U.S. Journal*. Trillin's range is wide—from conscientious objection in New Mexico to strip-mining in Appalachia to a school fight in Denver to an auction in Atlantic City; he reminds us of what the Big Idea men tend to overlook, that life still goes on along its varied and peculiar course in towns around the country. He is a professional, too, in not letting his hard work show. It is evident from this collection that he asks a lot of questions of a lot of people, then takes pains to compose an article rather than give us his notes embellished with higher thoughts; but no strain shows. Nor does he go clanking through his stories like some poor spirit desperate for attention or a pampered child at a party for grown-ups or a swinging journalist who can't bear to get out of the way of his subject. When he brings in "I," there's usually some point to it. Moreover, he manages to resist the temptation to come off as superior to those he writes about—a temptation to which *New Yorker* contributors have been known to succumb. Some of the pieces are rather slight to warrant republication, but at his most successful, as in his report on a campus recruiter for Dow Chemical, Trillin recreates a scene, a time, a person, and leaves us better acquainted with a part of our world than when we came to him. And, as I was especially grateful to note after slogging through Schrag, Trillin resists the Big Idea. Instead of force-feeding us conclusions, he invites us to share his observations. He is pleasant company.

Martin Buber



"All real living is meeting." So said Martin Buber, the great philosopher who abhorred capital punishment, opposed the Eichmann trial, and insisted that Israel could not survive without the Arabs. In this moving, unpretentious, very personal look at Buber's life and times, "the true spiritual genius and prophetic stature of Buber begin to emerge," says *Publishers' Weekly*. "Perhaps most valuable is Hodes's revelation of Buber's philosophical differences with the more material aspects of Zionism and the new Israel." The author was Buber's close friend and confidant. $7.95

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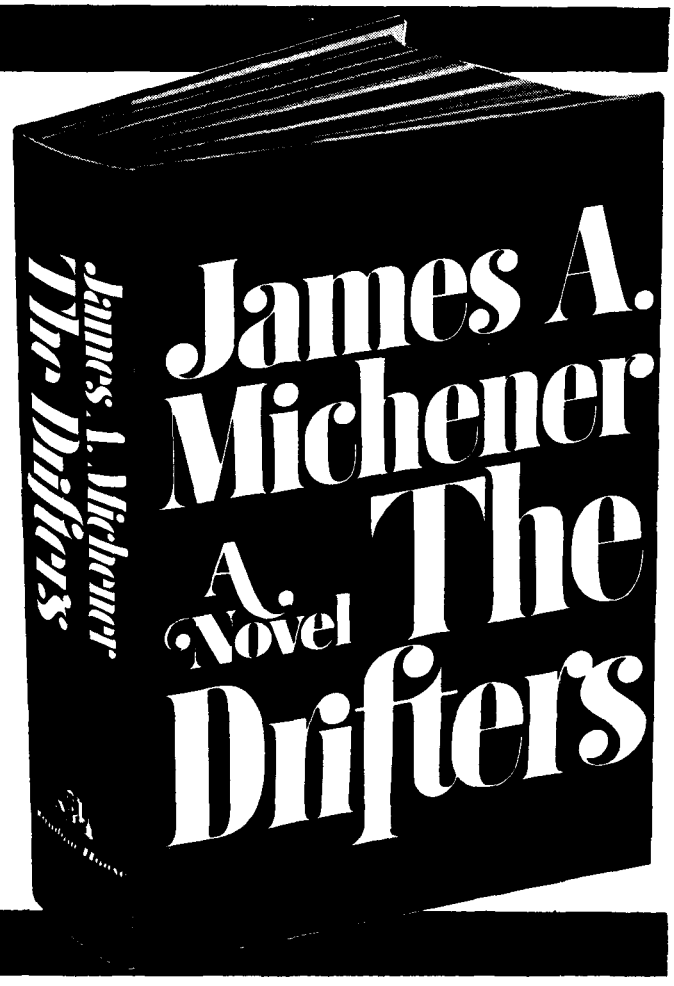

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BILL MOYERS, too, has done a considerable amount of traveling, by design and chance and whim—13,000 miles worth, according to the dust jacket of *Listening to America.* He has listened to the president of Antioch maundering about today's youth; to insurgent truck drivers in Indiana who read Saul Alinsky and Dale Carnegie; to students and police in Lawrence, Kansas, during a "tense situation"; to a conservationist in Idaho; to Orville Faubus campaigning in Arkansas; to a lot of people in Texas. He evidently has a knack for getting people to talk to him. Most of the passages are interesting; several are more than that. A few are moving, particularly his visit in Clear Creek Valley, Wyoming, with the parents of a Peace Corpsman who died in a plane crash at the age of twenty-two. If there is a central concern in this random sampling of conversations—where, oddly enough, the good guys always come out much better than the bad guys—it is the pain and confusion that people everywhere are feeling as they try to figure out how they fell into the generation gap. The only thing they are sure of is, it hurts.

For a writer to take the several parts of this book and make of them a whole is not an easy job. It would require more gifts than Bill Moyers brings to his work. De Tocqueville went forth equipped with considerable experience of men and ideas; Moyers had a tape recorder. Despite his credentials as an intimate of Lyndon Johnson, his acquaintance with politics seems shallow—and his observations lean to the banal: "But only in the midst of adversity—in the good-natured optimism of the people waiting in line for their unemployment checks, in the pride and courage of the Streets, Carrolls, and Metcalfs, and in the honest self-questioning of the man who bared his soul at Boeing—did I find those qualities which are the bedrock strength of America."

After completing an enlightening series of interviews in the company-town of Johnsonville, South Carolina, Moyers typically signs off with: "But, however haltingly, an awareness has come to some people that it is no longer necessary or wise to keep things as they always were. And there are people here, black and white, who believe they can work themselves through the dilemmas of their culture, even if they have to do it by the seat of their pants. Some have fought hard battles and have been tempted to leave, but they remain." He adds nothing—but he has already given a good deal. *Listening to America* is an illuminating piece of journalism.

Yazoo, finally, shows what can be accomplished by a writer of intelligence and sensibility involved with a subject of manageable proportions. Willie Morris's return to Yazoo, the Mississippi town where he was raised, was more than an assignment: "Why," he asks at the end of this small book, "after seven years in Texas, three and a half in England and Europe, four as editor of a magazine [*Harper's,* from which he has since resigned] with one of the most distinguished histories in the nation, am I still a son of that bedeviled and mystifying and exasperating region?" Such feelings are not unique to Mississippians; most of the writers mentioned above exhibit a need to come to terms with their earliest experiences—Salisbury in Minneapolis; Trillin in Kansas City, Missouri; Moyers in Texas; Schrag, as a Jewish boy in Nazi-held Europe. We are all expatriates. Still, the South seems to have its special power, particularly for the literary imagination, and in a series of quiet conversations and reflections, Morris works his way into the contradictions of the home town which he fled but cannot escape.

"Who gives a damn about the South any more?" he asks. "Who, for that matter, gives a damn about integration?" He is asking the question from New York, where causes are used up by high-flying thinkers the way vacation spots are used up by the jet set. A part of intellectualdom got bored with integration a few years ago and has been hustling to catch onto other slogans as they whiz by. But in Yazoo, where blacks and whites have to live together, Morris found plenty of interest in integration, many changes, and remarkable instances of tolerance for human failings. A brave white storekeeper who sided with a Negro boycott, says: "People try, you know. They really try. Some whites come into my store even now. They're fightin' against themselves. Some of these whites have been gallant. I understand. Believe me, I do. Friday and Saturday nights, when the blacks are here shoppin' with their welfare checks, some of the whites feel squeezed out. I understand."

A black girl in an integrated school says: "Things are better than they used to be. Now they'll walk beside you in the hall. They won't say, the way they used to, 'That nigger stinks.' In class some of the boys would open a window and say, 'I'm lettin' out some nigger air.' Every time I stand in a mixed line at the water fountain now, I can't help rememberin' my first year. I'd be standin' in line and they'd . . . say, 'Don't drink that water, a nigger's been drinkin' there.'"

Today, the problems of benighted Yazoo seem easy compared with those of enlightened New York or Newark. "Yazoo is not like some of these other towns," a priest tells Morris. "Beneath the surface I don't think relations are so bad. The bad part's all been *on* the surface." One need not take this comment, or the book itself, without a bit of skepticism; yet perhaps one of the things that draws Morris and the other writers back home is the recollection of youth as a time when life consisted of dealings among recognizable people, before we became sufficiently educated to see conflicts as reflections of forces beyond the reach of ordinary men, out of control, susceptible only to influences on the grandest levels, or to violent overturns of custom or to the abrupt shattering of accepted relationships. A necessary lesson gained; a valuable truth lost.

"Homegoing" books have a melancholy air; only in science-fiction is the past recapturable. Yet *Yazoo* is heartening because it reminds us, without the hint of preachment, that some injustices, even those which excite the most violent passions, can be alleviated, and that it is within the capacity of ordinary men to play a part in that process. (Maybe that's what Bill Moyers and Harrison Salisbury were getting at, too.) For how this happens or why it does not happen, see your favorite journalist.

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Ideology and Policy

THE GERMAN DICTATORSHIP: THE ORIGINS, STRUCTURE, AND EFFECTS OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM. By KARL DIETRICH BRACHER. Translated by Jean Steinberg. Introduction by Peter Gay. *Praeger. 553 pp. $13.95.*

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF HITLER'S GERMANY: DIPLOMATIC REVOLUTION IN EUROPE, 1933-1936. By GERHARD L. WEINBERG. *University of Chicago Press. 397 pp. $12.75.*

Reviewed by LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ

KARL DIETRICH BRACHER, professor of political science and contemporary history at the University of Bonn and the author of major studies on the dissolution of the Weimar Republic and on the Nazi seizure of power, is one of the new generation of German historians who in recent years have come to confront their national past without evasion or self-pity. In *The German Dictatorship* (the first of his books to be published in English) it is no exaggeration to say that he has produced a work of unparalleled distinction, combining the most scrupulous objectivity with a passionate commitment to the democratic ethos. As Bracher writes in the preface: "This book is dedicated to the hope that a sober picture of the German dictatorship may help Germany avoid both old and new dangers, primarily the traditional authoritarian concept of the state, but also a radical utopianism—both expressions of intolerance and conceit, and, moreover, profoundly unpolitical modes of behavior."

A good part of the book deals with the history of modern Germany prior to 1933, in a wide-ranging effort to uncover the roots of Nazism. Bracher emphatically rejects the theory of a universal, undifferentiated fascism, invoked by many scholars to explain the rise of the Nazi dictatorship. Though he takes into account the fact that nationalist, racist, elitist, and pseudo-socialist ideas were rife throughout Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries, he indicates that these did not result in a uniform effect; the fascist phenomenon varied from locale to locale, and the German brand can best be understood by tracing it, as Bracher does, from its roots in Bismarck's Germany and in the Hapsburg Empire, to the critical events in post-World War I Germany. Bracher also rejects the currently fashionable theory of totalitarianism that views right- and left-wing dictatorships as similar phenomena and that fails to make critical distinctions between authoritarian-traditional modes of rule and totalitarian-revolutionary ones as to their premises, goals, and content. For Bracher, National Socialism was a purely German manifestation, without precise precedent or analogue—not merely the outgrowth of "prefascist philosophers and their pseudo-scientific theories," but "the specifically German phenomenon of the ready acceptance [of these theories] in a concrete political and social situation."

National Socialism, he contends further, was given its unique shape and force by certain developments in modern German history so peculiarly localized as to defy ready comparison with or accommodation to one political theory. These included:

> . . . the fragility of the democratic tradition and the powerful remnants of authoritarian governmental and social institutions before and after 1848; the susceptibility to nationalistic, imperialistic ideas, a product of the belated and never fully realized creation of a German national state; the problems arising out of the unexpected defeat and the resultant stab-in-the-back legend, and the widespread disgruntlement over the Versailles peace; the permanent crisis of a republic which never won the full support of the majority of the people; the explosive consequences of the Depression on this highly industrialized, socially and religiously divided state with its feudalistic, traditionalistic remnants; and, finally, the middle class's fear of proletarianization and Communism, and the added resentment and panic of a rural population threatened by the spread of modern technology.

In addition to the emphasis on the specifically German character of National Socialism, Bracher also stresses the importance of ideology as a factor in the Nazi ascendancy, even though the movement's thinking was eclectic, its conduct opportunistic, and its "ideas of power politics vulgarly Machiavellian." Nevertheless, he argues that it would be a mistake to ascribe National Socialism's rapid success merely to luck or improvisation. Indeed, "the basic and fatal error" which was made prior to 1933 first inside Germany and later everywhere else was to underestimate the Nazi movement and the terrible directness with which Hitler moved to realize the Nazi doctrine and ideology on both the domestic and foreign fronts. That ideology, with whose "absolute truth" Hitler and his cohorts were obsessed, had been outlined in *Mein Kampf*. Its three cardinal principles were hatred of the Jews, *Lebensraum* (Germany's own brand of racial-national imperialism), and the supremacy of *Fuehrer* dictatorship.

THE importance of ideology in the Nazi scheme emerged most clearly with regard to the "Jewish Question." From the outset, National Socialist doctrine assigned primacy of place to anti-Semitism, making Jew-hatred, with all its tragic consequences, a cardinal feature of state policy. Anti-Semitism became, in Bracher's words, the Nazi party's "one basic principle to which Hitler subscribed deeply, blindly, and ruthlessly." Whereas the "socialist" notions which Hitler and the NSDAP had originally claimed to profess evaporated almost immediately, the elitist racist doctrine and radical anti-Semitism "remained the only genuine kernel of Hitler's ideology," regardless of what the party publicly proclaimed. From this obsession there evolved that fatally effective conjoining—detailed in the chapter "Disenfranchisement and Persecution"—of the anti-Semitic terror "from below" with its official sanction by the authorities. The Nazis, as is well known, regularly employed pseudo-legal procedures in an at-

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tempt to lend a veneer of legitimacy to the most criminal of actions, but in no other area of their domestic or foreign policy was this practice so pronounced, nor the intent so transparent. It all culminated, of course, in mass murder, revealing "the racist ideology of National Socialism to be an end in itself"; indeed, at the height of the war, when the effort expended on genocide might, from an economic or military standpoint, have been put to more profitable purpose, the Nazi hierarchy insisted on murdering the Jews instead of exploiting their labor.

Support for the Nazi regime, Bracher maintains, rested on a widespread longing of the German people for a strong state, a proclivity nourished by the party's propaganda and reinforced by Hitler's successes on the domestic and foreign fronts. It was this eagerness on the part of so many Germans to submit to the authoritarian state which, in his view, even more than the terror and the coercion, serves to explain the failure to develop a unified resistance movement.

The earliest to offer resistance were those who first felt the brunt of the Nazi terror—the members of the organized labor movements of the Left. But intensified surveillance and persecution destroyed whatever opposition they could muster, and after 1936 all that remained in the way of resistance were the "self-sacrificing" acts of "individuals and minute groups, mutual help, close contact with reliable friends, exchange of information." Later, during the war, there was the tenuous resistance of certain military and conservative groups. The resistance of the religious and political idealists was even more fragile. The heroism of a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for instance, who regarded opposition to the Nazi regime as an "act of penitence," was an isolated example of its kind. And the now famous White Rose movement was small and insubstantial. This student group, which emerged in 1942 at the University of Munich, launched its rebellion (in February 1943) by distributing leaflets calling for resistance to Hitler as follows:

> Even though we know that National Socialist power must be broken militarily, we want to achieve the renewal of the badly wounded spirit from within. This rebirth, however, must be preceded by the acceptance of the guilt which the German nation has heaped upon itself and by a ruthless battle against Hitler and his all too many accomplices.

The members of the White Rose were all apprehended, tried by a People's Court, and executed. Not a single member of Munich's academic community dared to petition for their pardon. Resistance, Bracher observes, was "a lonely and disreputable affair."

Looking at present-day Germany, Bracher notes that many of the conditions that prompted the rise of the Nazi movement still exist—"the social and ideological feelings of imminent crisis, antidemocratic and *völkisch*-nationalist emotions, authoritarianism and antimodernism," along with a refusal to accept historical experience.

> The German dictatorship has failed, but German democracy has not yet been secured. Securing it remains a task that demands full awareness that the road to a real and realistic democratization is a narrow one, still strewn with many obstacles. It runs between the continuing burden of the past and the increased demands of the future, between the threats of the authoritarian tradition and the exaggerated promises of ideological radicalism which prevented the maturing of democracy in Germany and paved the way for the most terrible dictatorship mankind has known. The heritage of National Socialism lives on—negatively in the dangers of a relapse, positively in the opportunities of an educational process drawing on the experience of the past. In this special situation Germany—West and East—will have to live so long as national sovereignty remains the motive force in contemporary political life.

A somber ending to a disquieting survey, and one deserving of the most earnest attention. This is a book for layman and scholar, for those who lived through the Nazi era, as well as for those to whom the German dictatorship is as distant an echo of the past as the Crusades.

ANOTHER book that could well serve the same purpose, though far more specialized, is Gerhard L. Weinberg's *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany,* the first of several projected volumes of what will surely be the definitive study of its subject. Professor Weinberg, who teaches history at the University of Michigan and has written extensively on Nazi Germany, has likewise produced a work of meticulous scholarship; and again like Bracher, he too sees Hitler's domestic and foreign policies as interconnected and as functions of Nazi ideology.

Hitler's ideas about race were linked to the concept of territorial space. Both race and space, as Weinberg shows, determined his view of international affairs and shaped a foreign policy that differed radically from traditional diplomacy.* Hitler's ideas of foreign policy took as their starting point the German defeat in World War I, the infamous "stab-in-the-back" myth which blamed the Jews and their "henchmen" for sapping Germany of its vitality and contaminating its racial purity—a condition that would find rectification only when those elements responsible for the collapse had been eradicated, and a nationally-conscious government (led by the NSDAP, of course) installed in power. That accomplished, with democracy eliminated and the military rearmed, Germany could then embark on a foreign policy consonant with its racial imperatives.

At this point Hitler's notions of race and space combined to form his theory of *Lebensraum.* In his mind the struggle of the races for survival was fundamentally a struggle for space, and space to Hitler meant, above all, arable soil sufficient to support the population and the national purpose.

* Weinberg—and Bracher, too, for that matter—summarily dismisses A.J.P. Taylor's perverse attempt at historical revisionism in *The Origins of the Second World War* (1962), in which Hitler is depicted as an 18th-century diplomat, seeking redress without desiring war.

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The space that Germany "needed" to maintain the requisite "racial vitality" was located, as the world came to learn, in the East, in the vast expanses of Russia. The *Lebensraum* would have to be acquired by war, but the human costs of military conflict, as Hitler stressed continuously, would be offset by the racial gains. He expounded this doctrine openly in *Mein Kampf*:

> . . . we National Socialists must hold unflinchingly to our aim in foreign policy, namely, *to secure for the German people the land and soil to which they are entitled on this earth.* And this action is the only one which, before God and our German posterity, would make any sacrifice of blood seem justified. . . . The soil on which some day German generations of peasants can beget powerful sons will sanction the investment of the sons of today, and will some day acquit the responsible statesmen of blood-guilt and sacrifice of the people, even if they are persecuted by their contemporaries. [Italics in the original.]

He also gave voice to the theme in an oratorical performance before Germany's top industrialists privately assembled in Düsseldorf a full year before the seizure of power. Once he became Chancellor, Hitler refrained from publicly asserting his racial-territorial objectives, but privately he continued to articulate such intentions. And all the while, as he prepared for the military climax, he pursued a series of diplomatic strategies, "with a combination of caution and bravado, of opportunism and consistency," as Weinberg writes, all designed to advance his goals.

By mid-1936 Hitler had reached the point where he felt he had accomplished the first stage of his foreign policy—internal purgation of the opposition, consolidation of his power, rearmament. He was now ready to embark on a policy of aggression. The heart of the story—and here Weinberg is particularly adept at threading his way through the welter of details of Germany's foreign relations—is German rearmament and the remilitarization, by 1936, of the Rhineland, two achievements which marked a signal triumph for Hitler, bringing about as they did the collapse of the post-World War I security system and resulting in a drastic change in international power relations. Flushed with the success of having secured tacit international acquiescence to his policies, Hitler was now ready to take the next giant step toward war and, in August 1936, in a secret memorandum, he promulgated the Four Year Plan outlining the procedures for military and economic mobilization to prepare the nation for war, a war of conquest that would gain Germany her precious *Lebensraum* and achieve the prize of racial empire. Goering, to whom Hitler entrusted the execution of the Plan, confided to his air-force generals: "We are already at war; only the shooting has not yet started."

These words were uttered at the end of 1936, the *terminus ad quem* of the present inquiry. The volume to follow, no doubt, will carry the investigation into the actual "shooting" and Hitler's conduct of the war, and Professor Weinberg, I am certain, will bring to that task the same special competence that so distinguishes the first volume of his series.

Poverty à la Mode

THE UNKNOWN MAYHEW. By EILEEN YEO and E. P. THOMPSON. *Pantheon. 489 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by
GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

THE historian who does not subscribe to the creed of "relevance," who believes, indeed, that the best history is written without thought of contemporary relevance, is embarrassed by the occasions when history seems to be all too relevant. In this respect, 19th-century England is a constant source of embarrassment. With the best will in the world, one cannot confront that period, and particularly the social history of the period, without experiencing a recurrent shock of recognition. Some historians never recover from that shock. For them the Victorians are not only our forefathers but also our contemporaries; their social problems are ours, their attempts to cope with them are, for good or bad, an object lesson to us.

The history of poverty is particularly susceptible to this kind of present-mindedness. Like us, the Victorians lived through a time of profound social change. Like us, they faced not only the problem of poverty but also the problem of poverty in the context of affluence. (Our own social moralists who think they have discovered the evils of affluence might be chastened and even edified by reading Carlyle or Matthew Arnold, Dickens or Trollope.) And like us, the Victorians had a bad conscience. At a time that is still sometimes thought of as the heyday of laissez-faire, they appointed Royal Commissions and Select Committees, passed legislation and created administrative agencies, formed statistical societies and reform organizations, and privately and collectively, almost obsessively, inquired into what was euphemistically called the "Condition of England question."

One of the great social documents to come out of this ferment was Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*, published in four volumes in 1861-62 and reprinted in 1865. The work has been much quoted and excerpted, although only in the past decade has it been reprinted in its entirety, and not once but in several different editions. Considering its bulk, these reprints testify both to the present modishness of social history and to the presumed "relevance" of the subject. The work has also been much misunderstood —again a commentary on the state of social history and of the confusion governing our own thinking about our own poverty.

THE introduction to a recent American reprint of *London Labour* praises Mayhew for having "uncovered and codified data on the modern proletariat that whole municipal and federal agencies

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are only now beginning to assemble." One can only hope that the data being assembled by our municipal and federal agencies are more reliable than those in *London Labour*—in any case, the most reliable of Mayhew's data are probably those which he borrowed (as he liberally did) from the government agencies of his own time. More serious is the assumption that the data had to do with the "modern proletariat." *London Labour* is in fact less about the modern proletariat than about what a Marxist might call the "lumpenproletariat." Mayhew himself accurately described its subject matter in the subtitle of the first three volumes: "The London Street-Folk; comprising Street Sellers, Street Buyers, Street Finders, Street Performers, Street Artisans, Street Labourers"; and in the subtitle of the fourth volume: "Those That Will Not Work, comprising Prostitutes, Thieves, Swindlers, and Beggars." These are hardly the constituents of a "modern proletariat."

BUT if the Mayhew of *London Labour* cannot be pressed into service, perhaps another Mayhew can. The purpose of the present volume is to create just such a Mayhew, an "unknown" Mayhew who was indeed concerned with the proletariat. This is the Mayhew who wrote the series of articles in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1849-50 that provided the inspiration, and some of the material, for *London Labour*. Something over half of those original articles, it now appears, were not reprinted in *London Labour*, and this volume is largely a selection from these hitherto unreprinted articles.*

The new Mayhew, as the editors present him in their separate introductions, is methodologically as well as substantively different from the old. The old was concerned with the "street-folk," the new with the "working trades." The old was at best a "gifted impressionist with an eye for character," at worst a journalist pandering to popular taste; the new is a "systematic empirical sociologist." And not only is he a systematic sociologist; he is also a systematic social theorist, profoundly critical of orthodox political economy and with serious views of his own on the causes and remedies of low wages.

THE difficulty with all this is that the two Mayhews cannot be so clearly differentiated, either in time or in character. Although most of the "working trades"—weavers, needlewomen, tailors, shoemakers, etc.—were omitted from *London Labour*, leaving the latter devoted almost exclusively to the "street-folk," the *Morning Chronicle* articles were by no means exclusively concerned with the working trades, as the present selection might suggest. On the contrary, the street-folk made their appearance early in the *Morning Chronicle* series and were a prominent theme throughout. Thus Mayhew's preoccupation with the working trades, even in what Thompson calls his "great period," was less compelling than one might assume from a reading either of the introductions to this volume or of the selections themselves, which do not include the articles on the street-folk reprinted in *London Labour*.

Nor did Mayhew's concern with the working trades—to the extent to which he was concerned with them—coincide with his ventures into political economy and social theory. The latter appeared mainly on the wrappers of the weekly two-penny parts which succeeded the *Morning Chronicle* series late in 1850 (Mayhew left the paper at that time), and in four pamphlets issued the following year under the title of *Low Wages: Their Causes, Consequences and Remedies*. But at the same time that he was engaging in these theoretical speculations, he was also transferring his entire attention to the street-folk and abandoning all attempts to inquire into the working trades; it was these two-penny parts, all on the street-folk, that were bound together—without, however, the wrappers—to form the first two volumes of *London Labour*. Thompson alludes to this anomaly: "Indeed, while Mayhew's most systematic thought belongs to the wrappers of 1851, his most profound experience of London poverty belongs, most probably, to the previous year"—the poverty of the street-folk being presumably less profound than that of the working trades. Are we then to take the wrappers seriously but not the contents? Are we to assume that the "great period" of Mayhew lasted for little more than one year, and then only intermittently? Is this the "unknown Mayhew" for whom such large claims are made?

And what of the claims themselves? Here, as elsewhere, Yeo is the more insistent and excessive of the editors. Both editors invoke the image of Mayhew as a systematic empirical sociologist. But Yeo does so in the spirit of a defense attorney confronting a hostile judge and jury, as if her client's life depended on it. When Mayhew declared his "determination to follow the facts, whithersoever they may lead," and in the same sentence defended his right of "generalizing, before he has made himself acquainted with all the particulars" (he was here speaking of himself in the third person), Yeo quotes this as the statement of a "sophisticated empiricist" appreciative of the "subtle interplay between facts and hypotheses." When he defined the "poor" as "those persons whose incomings are insufficient for the satisfaction of their wants—a want being, according to my idea, contradistinguished from a mere desire by a positive physical pain, instead of mental uneasiness, accompanying it," she takes this banal statement to be the first attempt "in the history of English social investigation to define a poverty line," a definition which compares favorably, in her opinion, with Booth's, although perhaps not with Rowntree's. In other re-

* This volume is *not*, as the title of the American edition would suggest, a biography of Mayhew. The English edition was accurately titled: *The Unknown Mayhew: Selections from the Morning Chronicle, 1849-50*, edited and introduced by E.P. Thompson and Eileen Yeo. Since the American edition is otherwise identical with the English, the elimination of the subtitle and of the key words, "edited and introduced," must have been a deliberate decision on the part of the American publishers—a futile exercise in false packaging, one would think, considering the work's limited audience but perhaps for that reason all the more reprehensible.

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spects, she hastens to add, Mayhew is superior to Rowntree, as he is also superior to the Royal Commissions and Select Committees, statistical societies, and independent inquirers, who were making the "Condition of England question" one of the great national issues. (There is, curiously, no mention of Engels's *The Condition of the Working Class in England.*)

ONE hardly knows where to start correcting these excesses. One could cite, and document *ad taedium*, Thompson's warning, in an earlier essay (in *Victorian Studies*, 1967), that every one of Mayhew's tables and statistical data must be scrutinized with the greatest care—not, to be sure, for "dishonesty or manipulation, but for sheer slipshod technique and haste in getting to press." (The closest approximation to this in the present volume is an admission, in a footnote, that his "standard of proof-reading was not high.") Or one could compare Mayhew's ambitious methodological and procedural pronouncements with the actual course and content of his work: the "systematic" investigation of trades interspersed with discussions of lodging houses, Ragged Schools, or vagrancy; the avowed intention to study classes rather than individuals followed almost immediately by individual case-studies (including quantitative tables that look as if they applied to a group but were in fact summaries of a single individual's experience); professions of objectivity and comprehensiveness followed by the explanation that he proposed to start his inquiry with the Spitalfield weavers on the grounds that they were "notorious for their privations" as well as conveniently located.

The editors make much of the fact that Mayhew spurned the usual Victorian moralism. He never suffered, as Thompson puts it with his usual verve, from "middle-class moral halitosis." It is certainly true that, compared with most of his contemporaries, Mayhew did have a genuine understanding and compassion for lives which did not conform to the conventions of propriety or even legality. But precisely for that reason he did not try to shirk the large areas of impropriety and illegality in their lives. Is there a suspicion of middle-class moralism on the part of the editors in the deletion from this volume of two charts on the comparative incidence of criminality among different occupational groups? Surely this, even more than the individual life-histories, is the kind of material one would want to preserve in the work of a systematic sociologist. Or are the charts omitted because they seem to contradict each other—because they show how difficult it is to take Mayhew seriously as a systematic sociologist?

MORE important than deletions within the articles is the omission of entire articles where questions of morality and legality loom large —those, for example, on the Ragged Schools (charity schools for the children of the very poor). Mayhew denounced the schools for being little more than schools of crime. The youngsters, he claimed, were so ingenious in criminality that they used whatever education they acquired to further their criminal careers, and he cited statistics to prove the direct relation between increased literacy and crime. One might think that the intrinsic interest of these articles (among other things, Mayhew was here pitted against the formidable reformer, Lord Ashley, whose favorite scheme this was), as well as the fact that they were not reprinted in *London Labour*, would justify their inclusion here; indeed Thompson himself is sufficiently interested in them to discuss them in his introduction. One can only suppose that they are not included because they do not accord very well with the image of the new Mayhew.

This, finally, brings us to the heart of the problem: the omission from this volume of all the articles —reprinted or not—on the street-folk. One can understand this omission; we do, after all, have four solid volumes of *London Labour* on this subject. But without the street-folk, we cannot do justice to Mayhew, new or old. Thompson seems to admit this when he says that "the present book may redress the balance too far." And so indeed it has. Nor is the imbalance much corrected by Yeo, who, praising Mayhew for his sensitivity to the "subcultures" of poverty, devotes two-and-a-half pages of her introduction to the streetsellers—hardly sufficient compensation for the other forty-four pages of the introduction (to say nothing of the entire body of the selections). Yeo quotes some lines from *London Labour* in which Mayhew described the "wandering tribes"—that special "race" of men, as he called them, which included Bushmen, Bedouin, and London street-folk, all of whom shared certain essential features: ". . . they are all more or less distinguished for their high cheek-bones and protruding jaws—for their use of a slang language—for their lax ideas of property—for their general improvidence—their repugnance to continuous labour —their disregard of female honour —their love of cruelty—their pugnacity—and their utter want of religion." But she does not quote the earlier part of the same sentence in which Mayhew attributed to them "a greater development of the animal than of the intellectual or moral nature of man." Nor does she quote the numerous passages in which they appear as a race apart, unsocialized and uncivilized: "dangerous classes," "a foul disgrace," "utterly creedless, mindless, and principleless," a "vast dungheap of ignorance and vice," and much more in this vein.

One wonders whether the editors of the present volume would assign to these descriptions of the street-folk the same credibility, the same perceptive, objective qualities that they find in the "unknown Mayhew," the supposedly systematic investigator of the working trades. If there is an exaggeration in the one, may there not be an exaggeration in the other? Are we not, then, left in the end with an enormous body of raw material which must be scrutinized with the greatest care—and not only the statistical data which Thompson elsewhere warned us about, but also the qualitative data (life-histories, scenic descriptions, and the like)?

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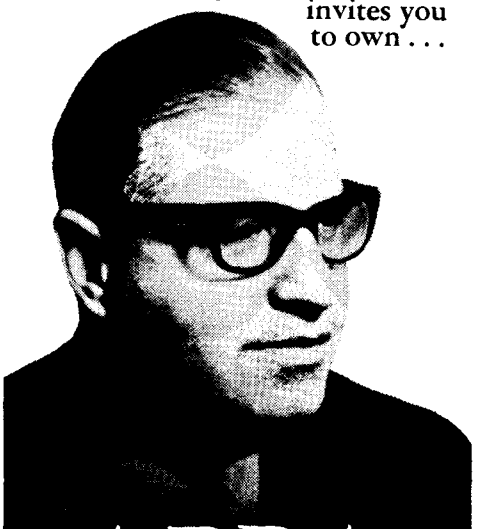

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It is a very great service of the editors of the present volume to have provided us with this raw material, and a great service on the part of Thompson in particular to have assembled, in his introduction, so many hitherto dispersed facts about Mayhew's life and the circumstances of the publication of his works. But it is a disservice to have made larger claims for this material than are warranted at the present. Before any bit of it can be used (except as it may document Mayhew's own attitudes or perceptions), it has to be analyzed and evaluated. How many people in each trade was he actually talking about? What was the nature of his evidence and how much of it can be trusted? How does it compare and collate with the evidence, similarly examined and tested, from other sources? The task is formidable. But before it is done, no one can speak confidently of Mayhew as a systematic sociologist or can put much credence in his findings.

What one can, however, say with confidence, even in the present state of the evidence, is that there were as many varieties of poor in Mayhew's day as in our own. There was not one "culture of poverty" but numerous subcultures. There was no "lower class" or "working class," but a multiplicity of "lower classes" and "working classes." (The two sets of terms, both in the plural, were sometimes used interchangeably, and sometimes to suggest different, although never entirely distinct, social groups.) Nor was there a "problem of poverty" in the sense in which we currently use that term; certain groups among the poor were seen as problematic, as constituting "*the* social problem," but others were not.

Here one approaches the true "relevance" of Mayhew. Reading him (either in *London Labour* or the *Morning Chronicle* or both) we may be alerted to the varieties of "poverty" and "poor" that are subsumed under those simple terms. Not that his varieties are ours—to make the street-folk even analogous to any social group today would be a most hazardous assumption. But to be made so dramatically aware of the varieties is surely a salutary experience; we might even consider adopting for ourselves the Victorian plural, as in "working classes." (The recent proposal to revive the term "lower class" might also be improved by reverting to the older plural form.)

And reading the interpretation of Mayhew presented in this volume, we may also be alerted to the temptation to magnify that variety of poverty which most commands our sympathy, which seems most worthy of the status of "the social problem"—perhaps because it lends itself most readily to social reform. The street-folk, as Mayhew readily admitted, were not, for the most part, reformable; they generally took to the streets because they had an "incapacity for steady and continuous employment," an "indisposition for any settled occupation" or for the "irksomeness of labour," an "objection to restraint," a "desire for the 'roving life,'" a propensity to "improvidence" and "intemperance." (These quotes are from some of the *Morning Chronicle* articles not reprinted here—the Mayhew of the "great period.") Their poverty was intractable because it derived from their character—their "race," as Mayhew so dramatically put it. The poverty of the working trades, on the other hand, was not of their own making; it was largely due to low wages, which (as the title of his pamphlet indicated) had "causes, consequences, and remedies."

It is this kind of poverty—the kind that had social, rather than personal, causes, consequences, and remedies—that Thompson prefers to dwell upon. And it is this kind of poverty, again because it is social rather than personal, that Yeo finds to be more objective, sociological, and empirical than the poverty of the street-folk, who seem so often to will their own fate. But the fact is that Mayhew himself was no less (or more) objective, sociological, or empirical about the street-folk than about the working trades. And more important is the fact that for most contemporaries the street-folk, rather than the working trades, constituted the major "social problem."

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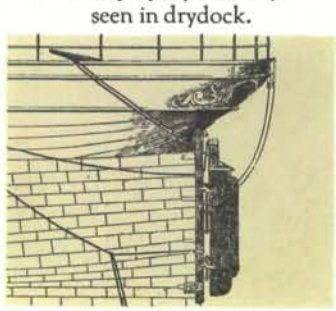
A special maritime board was convened which inspected the logs of both vessels and decided that, based on actual time under sail in equal conditions, *Cutty Sark* had made the faster passage. From that time on, *Cutty* was never beaten in equal competition. Small wonder that, years later, a reporter was to write of the finish of yet another clipper race, "*Cutty Sark* first... the rest, nowhere."

Courtesy private collection of Lt. Col. James M. Humphrey, M. C.

Capt. Moodie,
Cutty's commander
in her most famous race.

Cutty's jury rudder,
seen in drydock.



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